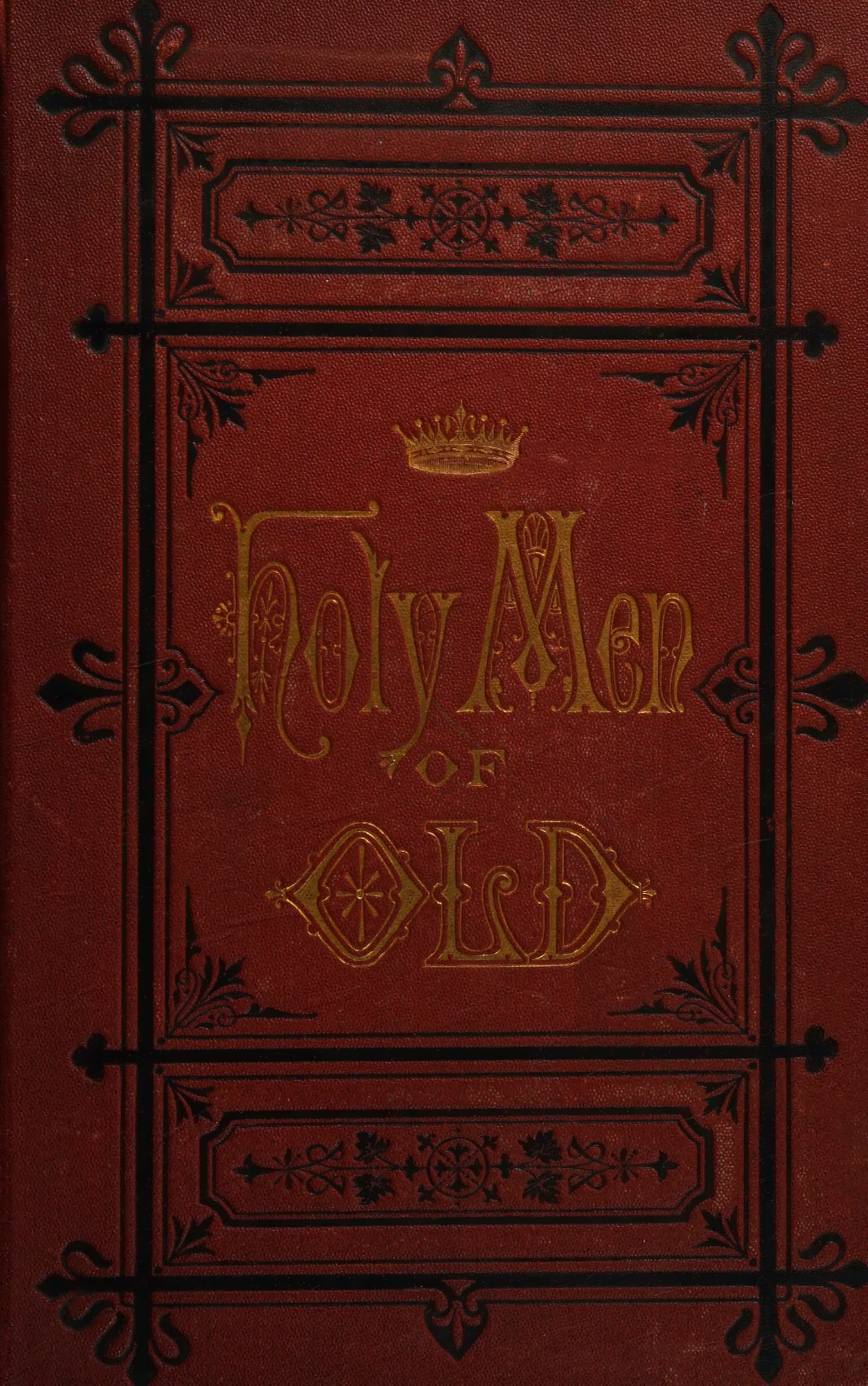
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OF
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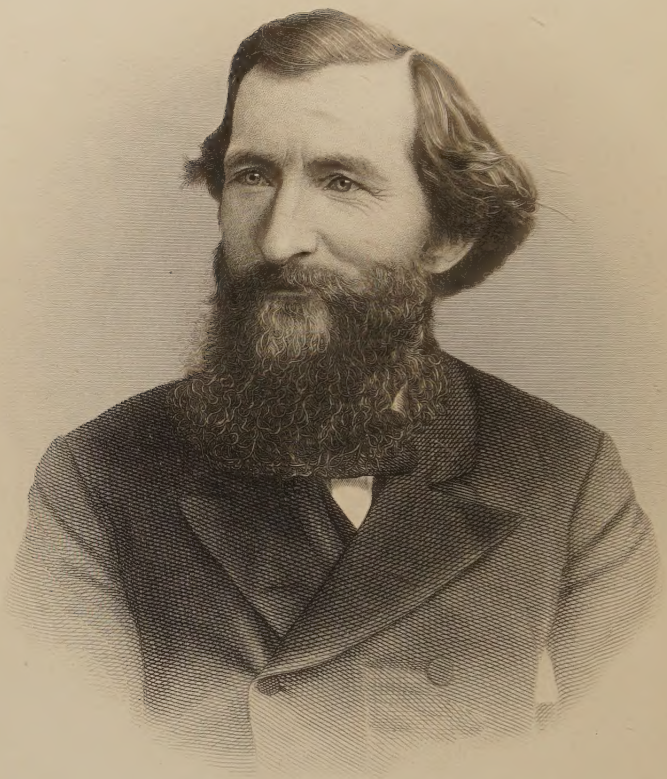

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W. H. P. Noble

"For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

HOLY MEN OF OLD.

BIOGRAPHIES

OF

MOSES, THE PROPHET OF THE LAW; ELIJAH, THE PROPHET OF FIRE; ISAIAH, THE PROPHET OF THE GOSPEL; JEREMIAH, THE PROPHET OF TEARS; DANIEL, THE PROPHET OF DREAMS; JOHN, THE PROPHET OF LOVE; AND OTHERS OF THE GREAT HEBREW SEERS.

TOGETHER WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

By Rev. W. F. P. NOBLE,

Author of "Prophets of the Bible," "Great Men of God," "A Century of Gospel Work," Etc., Etc.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY WM. C. CATTELL, D.D.,

President of Lafayette College, Easton, Pa.

With Numerous Illustrations by Doré

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PREFACE.

We do not think the world has grown worse during the progress of the ages. We believe it has grown a great deal better. But it will hurt none of us to be called back from trimming and time-serving to the uncompromising standard of the majestic, God-fearing, sin-hating prophets. Wickedness abounds still, in our own hearts, and in other men's; and, place our ideal as high as we may, we are in danger every hour of being pushed from our footing. And to come in contact with the grand old heroes of the Bible, to breathe the invigorating air of the Old Testament, may gird us with strength.

The writer claims no ability of his own to take these matchless characters of antiquity and start them afresh as embodiments and examples of what is most worthy of imitation. But he has drawn, in this work, from such masters in portraiture as Hamilton, Guthrie, Krummacher and Gilfillan—aiming to give the very words of the best writers upon sacred biography. With their aid, he has sought to clothe the teachings of a former age in the imagery of our own day—teachings as applicable now as when first given to the world; since "no prophecy is of any *private* interpretation," of merely local and temporary significance, but immutable as God, by whose inspiration all Scripture is given.

Having at first a specific and definite object, growing out of circum-

stances then existing, these words of olden time are on this account all the more suited to world-wide and permanent moral and religious uses. It was "the present truth" which the prophets spoke; the truth called for by the emergency then occurring, the sin then needing to be dealt with, the duty then needing to be enforced, line upon line, and precept upon precept. And touching living issues then—not made up of vague and vapid generalizations, but of burning words from the prophet's heart—by this very fact the teachings of the Holy Men of Old are adapted to the ever-changing conditions of humanity to the end of time. They relate to what is universal in human nature, though drawn out by exigencies long since passed away.

We know not what measure of success may attend this effort to freshen up the narratives of the Bible, and to show how applicable the teachings of the men of the past are to these modern times, but to ourselves it has been a grateful task to group the portraits of those Great Hebrew Seers whose office it was to speak to man for God and to God for man.

Philadelphia, June 20th, 1876.

INTRODUCTION.

The author of the following pages, who was one of my fellow-students in the Theological Seminary, has requested me to write an introduction to his work. It affords me sincere pleasure to comply with his request, both from my high personal regard for the accomplished writer and from the very favorable impression his work has made upon me, so far as I have been able to examine it.

My friend has certainly been happy in the choice of a subject. It has been well said that "history is philosophy teaching by examples;" and when we recall the familiar and truthful proverb, "Example is better than precept," we can well understand why history is so full of interest and of instruction. The great truths and principles which lie nearest to the lives of us all are presented, as it were, in pictures, and thus make a far deeper and more lasting impression than when conveyed in maxims or formal didactic statements.

Biography, or the life of an individual, comes still nearer to us than the lives of communities or nations. The "*Annales*" of Tacitus are models of historic composition, yet his "*Vita Agricolæ*," which portrays a single life, has for the general reader a much greater charm.

Dr. Johnson says, "I have often thought that there has rarely passed a life of which a judicious and faithful narrative would not be useful." ("*Rambler*," No. 60.) It is certainly true that every well written biography of a great and good man exerts a direct influence in the formation of noble character. The maxims and

precepts of virtue are indeed valuable, but some illustration of their exercise in real life is of still greater value, not only from the sharper outlines it presents to the eye, but from a sort of inspiration it seems to breathe upon the secret sympathies of our common human nature. Longfellow's familiar words are indeed true:

> "Lives of great men all remind us
> We can make our lives sublime."—

But there is more in the lives of great men than the mere suggestion of possibilities to the reader. They are positively helpful in the development of noble character. As we contemplate such lives we feel within ourselves an impulse kindred to that which moved the Scholar, the Patriot, the Christian. Something impels us to follow where such men lead.

Turning to the Bible, we find these principles recognized and made use of by the sacred writers. The earliest records are historical, and the history is mainly biographical. The history of the Church of God commences with the life of Abraham, and is continued in the lives of the principal personages who appear upon the scene. These biographies have, of course, a peculiar value as a part of that Scripture given by inspiration of God, all of which is profitable for doctrine and for instruction in righteousness. We are sure that every character introduced upon the sacred page is designed to mould our characters, not for this world alone, but for eternity; and whether the features portrayed are to be imitated or avoided, the lessons inculcated are far higher than those had in view by such biographers as Plutarch, Suetonius, or Cornelius Nepos, though their writings are among the treasures of all scholars. We are sure, also, that the Bible characters are truthfully delineated; nor are they impossible characters, like the legendary heroes of the classic writers, objects only of admiration and wonder. They are bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. The

Divine Grace that made these Bible heroes models of excellence is promised also to us, so that we may attain unto like excellence Moreover, their faults are frankly exhibited, so that we feel, while pressing forward to the mark for the same prize of their high calling, that our own shortcomings do not involve absolute failures.

The New Testament centres in the person and life of Christ. We have not one only, but four biographies. The Evangelists give us not only "the words of the Lord Jesus," but the narrative of his daily life. In only one of the gospels (that of John) do the discourses of our Lord predominate. It is his person that is everywhere set before us. The Communion is to be observed by His followers "in remembrance of HIM." The writers all aim to portray the character of Christ. There is something significant in the comprehensive formula of faith given by the Apostle: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." With great emphasis, Paul declares it to be the chief purpose and effort of his life "to know HIM;" and his triumphant declaration, "I know IN WHOM I have believed," would be even stronger if the preposition, which is not found in the Greek, were omitted in our translation: "I know WHOM I have believed!" Furthermore, the sacred writers lay great stress upon the fact of Christ's "leaving us an example" (1 Peter ii, 21). We are to be like Him. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (1 Phil. xi, 5). Of course, He who lived among men in divine as well as human nature must at times seem remote from our human sympathies. Gathering His robes of divine majesty about Him, He often moves in a path as high above ours as the heavens are above the earth. We cannot then "follow in His steps." He does not appear to us as our brother man, but as our divine Lord, and we can only gaze upon Him with adoring reverence, like the awe-stricken disciples upon Galilee, who could not recognize their friend and teacher in the spirit-like form that walked upon the raging billows. But oftener He seems, like one

of us, to walk in these same earthly paths of human joy and sorrow that we daily tread. At the marriage feast in Cana, and in the bereaved home at Bethany, he seems like an inmate of our households in our own times of joy and sorrow. It is then we "follow Him" with quickened step, strengthened as by no other example. Many of God's afflicted children have prayed for a spirit of submission in dark and trying hours, but they feel new strength born within them as they turn and look upon that prostrate form in Gethsemane, convulsed with agony, who would, if it were possible, have this cup of God's wrath pass from Him, and yet from whose quivering lips came only the submissive cry: "Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine, be done."

No attentive reader of the Bible can fail to be impressed with the wonderful charm of the very language in which these Scripture narratives are conveyed; but this by no means renders useless such amplification and illustration as the writer of this book has employed in presenting anew these characters for our contemplation. One who has carefully studied the times in which these "holy men of God" lived, and the circumstances under which they acted, and who approaches the subject with a devout spirit and a sincere desire to benefit his fellow-men, may reasonably hope to suggest many things possibly overlooked by the general reader, or to bring home with new power old and familiar truths. It is with this hope and expectation that the author sends forth his work. I unite with him in bespeaking for it, from Christian people, a thoughtful perusal.

WILLIAM C. CATTELL.

Lafayette College, June 14, 1876.

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HOLY MEN OF OLD.

PROPHECY—Not Confined to Prediction—Moral and Spiritual Teachers—Patriots—Divinely Inspired—Hebrew Word for Prophet—The Sixteen Prophetic Books—Messianic Prophecy—The Prophetical Order—Schools of the Prophets—The Prophetic State—Visions—Dreams—Prophets of the New Testament—Relation of the Prophetic Office to the Priesthood—Boldness of the Prophets—Have we such a Class now?—The Modern Minister.

PROPHECY is speaking for God, and a prophet is one who speaks for God. The Jewish prophet was not primarily or characteristically a foreteller, though he often spoke decisively and authoritatively concerning the future. He was inspired to reveal the will of God—to act as an organ of communication between God and man. The revelations thus conveyed were not and could not be restricted to the future. They embraced the past and the present, and extended to those absolute and universal truths which have no relation to time. That the gift of prophecy included more than foresight and prediction, is apparent from the history of the prophets, as well as from their writings. Daniel proved himself a prophet by telling Nebuchadnezzar what he had dreamed, as much as by interpreting the dream itself. It was only by prophetic inspiration that Elisha knew what Gehazi had been doing. And the woman of Samaria very properly called Christ a prophet, because He told her all things that ever she did.

The promise of a prophet like unto Moses, in the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, comprehends the promise of a constant succession of inspired men, so far as this should be required by the circumstances of the people, which succession

was to terminate in Christ. This promise was abundantly fulfilled. In every emergency requiring such an interposition, we find prophets present and active, and in some important periods of the history of Israel they existed in great numbers. These, though not all inspired writers, were all inspired men, raised up and directed by a special Divine influence, to signify and sometimes to execute the will of God, in the administration of the Theocracy. Joshua is expressly represented as enjoying such an influence, and is reckoned in the Jewish tradition as a prophet. The Judges who succeeded him were all raised up in special emergencies, and were directed and controlled by a special Divine influence or inspiration. Samuel was one of the most eminent prophets. David was a prophet: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by him, and His word was in his tongue." After the schism between Judah and Ephraim, the principal prophetical activity was to be found in the kingdom of Israel. The schools of the prophets had been first established, and still continued, at Ramah and Bethel and Gilgal, all situated within the northern State. At this period the prophets were counted by fifties, by hundreds, by five hundred at a time. And in the two centuries following the disruption, we read of only three belonging exclusively to Judah, namely Hanani the seer, Eliezer of Mareshah, and Joel. Of the others, who by birth or dwelling-place might be reckoned to Judah, as Iddo the seer, Amos, the elder Zechariah, and Jehu the son of Hanani, their ministrations, as far as we know, were almost exclusively directed to Israel. Micaiah the son of Imlah, Jonah, and Hosea, belong entirely to the northern kingdom. Elijah and Elisha grow up, speak, teach, live, and pass away, entirely in the Church of Israel. Not a message of blessing or warning, if we except the one short address of Elisha to Jehoshaphat, and the one short letter of Elijah to Jehoram, reaches the kings of Judah. At the decline of the kingdom of Israel, the seat of prophecy was transferred from the ancient schools of the North to

Judah and Jerusalem. The prophetic ministry continued through the Babylonish exile, and ceased some years after the restoration, in the person of Malachi, whom the Jews unanimously represent as the last of their prophets.

Among these great seers, Moses stands out pre-eminent—leader as well as prophet. This the religion of the East has always admitted more easily than that of the West. Mohammed, Abdel-Kader, Schamyl, are all illustrations of this union; and in sacred history it is found in Joshua and others, as well as Moses. From the death of the great lawgiver to the accession of Uzziah, a period of nearly seven hundred years, a large proportion of the prophets performed their functions orally, and without leaving anything on record. Joel is the connecting link between the older prophets, who are known to us only through their actions and sayings, and the later, who are known chiefly through their writings. The works of sixteen prophets have a place in our canon. These are not arranged in chronological order. Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel were of the era of the captivity. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi were the prophets of the restoration. Jonah, Nahum and Obadiah were prophets of the Gentiles.

The preaching of the prophets consisted largely of clear statements of men's sins, and earnest calls to repentance, coupled with the offer and promise of a free and full pardon to all who would turn from sin to Jehovah. They warned, threatened, exhorted; denounced the sins alike of rulers and subjects; instructed the people in the doctrines of religion; and did whatever was necessary to be done to make known the will and promote the service of God.

Naturally, the Hebrew prophet was a man who had the power of writing and speaking—that poetic genius which gives persuasiveness and force to the words uttered. He was not necessarily a priest or Levite, or a member of one of the sacred colleges, or a man externally appointed to the

task; but whether he belonged to one of these orders or not, he stepped forward of his own accord—at once self-moved, and moved from above—to the high office of warning the nation and its rulers. His voice was lifted up against sin of all kinds, against injustice, idolatry, deserting Jehovah for Assyrian or Egyptian gods. His wish was to preserve to the chosen people their nationality, and to check foreign marriages, treaties and customs. He called upon his countrymen to trust in themselves and in God. His words were warm with earnestness, with piety, with hope. When the nation was overrun by foreign armies, plundered, and even carried into captivity, he assured them that the day of punishment would be followed by the day of prosperity, and exhorted them to look forward to that day when peace would be on the earth, when Jerusalem would give law to the world, and Jehovah be acknowledged as the only true God.

As to the inspiration under which the prophet spoke and acted, there can be no doubt that the Bible itself represents it as plenary, or fully adequate to the attainment of its end. Where this end was external action, it was sufficiently secured by the gift of courage, strength and practical wisdom. Where the instruction of God's people was the object, whether in reference to the past, the present, or the future; whether in word, in writing, or in both; whether for temporary ends, or with a view to perpetual preservation; the prophets are clearly represented as infallible, that is, incapable of erring or deceiving, with respect to the matter of their revelation. How far this object was secured by direct suggestion, by negative control, or by an elevating influence upon the native powers, is a question of no practical importance to those who hold the essential doctrine that the inspiration was in all cases such as to render those who where inspired infallible.

The ordinary Hebrew word for prophet is NABI, which comes from a word that signifies to boil up, to boil forth as a fountain, and hence to pour forth words as those do who

speak with fervor of mind, or under a Divine inspiration. The word, therefore, properly describes one who speaks under a peculiar fervor, animation, or inspiration of mind, produced by a Divine influence; or else one who speaks, whether in foretelling future events, or in denouncing the judgments of God, when the mind is full, and when the excited and agitated spirit of the prophet pours forth the commissioned words, as water is driven from the fountain.

Two other Hebrew words are used to designate a prophet, both signifying a "seer." But the Anglicized Greek word which we use means "spokesman," one who speaks for God, in His name, and by His authority. Though in common language "prophecy" has come to mean "prediction," this is not the Bible use of the term. The different meanings, or shades of meaning, in which the word is employed in the New Testament may be stated thus: "Prediction;" "Singing by the dictate of the Spirit;" and "Interpretation," that is, understanding and explaining the mysterious, hidden sense of Scripture, by the immediate illumination of the Spirit.

THE SIXTEEN PROPHETS.

Of the prophets whose books are in the canon, we may say: 1. They were the national poets of the Hebrews. 2. They were annalists and historians. A great portion of Isaiah, of Jeremiah, of Daniel, of Jonah, of Haggai, is direct or indirect history. 3. They were preachers of patriotism; their patriotism being founded on the religious motive. 4. They were preachers of morals and of spiritual religion. The system of morals put forward by the prophets, if not higher or sterner, or purer than that of the Law, is more plainly declared, and with greater vehemence of diction. To expound, develop and apply the Law, was the business of the prophets. 5. They were a political power in the State. 6. They held a position somewhat corresponding to the modern pastoral office.

MESSIANIC PROPHECY.

7. But the prophets were something more than national poets and annalists, preachers of patriotism, moral teachers, exponents of the Law, pastors and politicians. They were instruments of revealing God's will to man, as in other ways, so specially by predicting future events, and in particular by foretelling the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the redemption effected by him. The Messianic picture drawn by the prophets as a body, contains, at least, as many traits as these: That salvation should come through the family of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David; that at the time of the final absorption of the Jewish power, Shiloh (the tranquilizer) should gather the nations under his rule; that there should be a great prophet, typified by Moses; a king descended from David; a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek; that there should be born into the world a child to be called Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace; that there should be a Righteous Servant of God, on whom the Lord would lay the iniquity of all; that Messiah, the Prince, should be cut off, but not for Himself; that an everlasting kingdom should be given by the Ancient of Days to one like the Son of Man. We have here a series of prophecies which are so applicable to the person and earthly life of Jesus Christ as to be thereby shown to have been designed to apply to Him.

But aside from the predictive element in their writings, the prophets and other inspired penmen and saints and heroes of the Hebrews pointed forward to the coming Messiah in another way. They were all "types," that is, " likenesses," in their sorrows of the Greatest of all sorrows, in their joys of the Greatest of all joys, in their goodness of the Greatest of all goodness, in their truth of the Greatest of all truths. The deep inward connection between the events of their own time and the crowning close of the history of their whole nation—the gradual convergence toward the event which, by

general acknowledgment, ranks chief in the annals of mankind—is clear not only to the all-searching eye of Providence, but also to the eye of any who look above the stir and movement of earth. It is part not only of the foreknowledge of God, but of the universal workings of human nature and human history. The mind flies silently upward from the earthly career of David, or Isaiah, or Ezekiel, to those vaster and wider thoughts which they imperfectly represented.

And yet the sorrow, the joy, the goodness, the truth of these great men of God, is entirely their own. They are not mere machines or pictures. When they speak of their trials and difficulties, they speak of them as from their own experience. By studying them with all the peculiarities of their time, we arrive at a profounder view of the truths and events to which their expressions and the story of their deeds may be applied in after years, than if we regard them as the organs of sounds unintelligible to themselves, and with no bearing on their own period. Where there is a sentiment common to them and to Christian times, a word or act which breaks forth into the distant future, it will be reverently caught up by those who are on the watch for it, to whom it will speak words beyond their words, and thoughts beyond their thoughts. But even in the act of uttering these sentiments, they still remained encompassed with human, Jewish, Oriental peculiarities, which must not be explained away or softened down.

THE PROPHETICAL ORDER.

The sacerdotal order was originally the instrument by which the members of the Jewish Theocracy were taught and governed in things spiritual. Teaching by act and teaching by word were alike their task. But during the time of the Judges, the priesthood sank into a state of degeneracy, and the people were no longer affected by the acted lessons of the ceremonial service. Under these circumstances a new moral

power was evoked—the Prophetic order. Samuel, himself a Levite, and almost certainly a priest, was the instrument used at once for effecting a reform in the sacerdotal order, and for giving to the prophets as a class, a more important position than they had before held. The germs both of the prophetic and the regal order are found in the law. These were developed by Samuel. Samuel took measures to make his work of restoration not only effective for the moment, but permanent also. For this purpose he instituted companies or colleges of prophets. One we find in his life-time at Ramah, others afterward at Bethel, Jericho, Gilgal, and elsewhere. Their constitution and object were similar to those of theological colleges. And so successful were these institutions, that from the time of Samuel to the closing of the canon of the Old Testament, there seems never to have been wanting a due supply of men to keep up the line of official prophets. But all the inspired prophets did not come from these colleges, but were drawn in some instances directly from the ordinary professions, and belonged to all classes of society. Isaiah and Daniel were of royal blood; Elisha was a farmer; Amos was a shepherd; Jeremiah and Ezekiel were priests.

SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS.

The prophet was not a mere Æolian harp, from which a chance breeze drew forth certain wild and irregular, though beautiful notes. As a rule he was carefully prepared for the office. Where great natural gifts existed, this preparation was not always in schools. And yet Moses, the greatest of the prophets, was trained first in all the wisdom of Egypt, and then by forty years of meditation and study while keeping his flocks in the desert. What greater opportunities of thorough self-culture exist even at the present day than those enjoyed by Moses? First, to have the learning and scholastic discipline of the schools, and then, in the ripeness and

maturity of his powers, to spend more than the average term of human life in solitary self-communion amid the sublime scenery of Sinai? And how gross the error to imagine Moses a mere passive instrument of the Divine will, as though he had himself borne no conscious part in the actions in which he figured, or the messages which he delivered; a theory as unscriptural as irrational, for it is expressly said: "Did not *Moses* give you the law?" "*Moses*, because of the hardness of your heart, suffered you;" "*Moses* gave you circumcision;" "Moses accuseth you." And what was needed by this man of marvelous gifts, to prepare him for the greatest work ever intrusted to man, was needed also by men of lesser gifts who followed him, to prepare them for the duties, less momentous than his, but yet vast and responsible, which in the Providence of God they would be called to discharge. And this preparation, during the greater part of the continuance of the Theocracy, and in the case of the larger proportion of the prophets, was furnished in the schools established by Samuel. A new impulse was given to these, and to the whole prophetic order, by Elijah. At this time the companies of the prophets reappear in the narrative, and they seem to have been bound by a still closer connection with him, than they had been with Samuel. Then they were "companies, bands, of prophets," now "sons, children of the prophets;" and Elijah first, and Elisha afterward, appeared as the "Father," the "Abbot," the "Father in God," of the whole community. These sons of the prophets, we know from the inspired narrative, were not forbidden to marry, and the families of those who were married no doubt formed a part of the community. The chief subject of study would be the Law and its interpretation, with music and sacred poetry, and so much of natural science as was known to the Hebrews. From these seminaries were probably derived the schools of the Rabbis, and other institutions, partaking somewhat of a collegiate or monastic character

which were common in the later ages of Judaism. And these again were no doubt the stock whence sprung those institutions which have spread over Christian lands, and under different forms, more or less skillfully adapted to their end, have continued to contribute their aid toward the preservation and dissemination of truth and science.

THE PROPHETIC STATE.

The conditions under which the Divine communications were received by the prophet have not been clearly declared to us. So far as anything can be inferred from incidental or explicit statements of the Scripture, the most usual method of communication would appear to have been that of immediate vision, that is, the presentation of the thing to be revealed as if it were an object of sight. Thus Micaiah *saw* Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and Isaiah *saw* Jehovah sitting on a lofty throne. That this was the most usual mode of presentation, is probable not only from occasional expressions such as those just quoted, but from the fact that a very large proportion of the prophetic revelations are precisely such as might be painted and subjected to the sense of sight. The same conclusion is confirmed by the use of the words *seer* and *vision* as essentially equivalent to *prophet* and *prophecy*. There is no need, however, of supposing that this method of communication was used invariably. Some things in the prophecies require us to suppose that they were made known to the prophet just as he made them known to others, to wit, by the suggestion of appropriate words.

In the opinion of some the prophetic "vision" differed little from the prophetic "dream." In the case of Abraham and of Daniel they seem to melt into each other. In both, the external senses are at rest, reflection is quiescent, and intuition active. Upon this theory, the prophetic trance was of the following nature: 1. The bodily senses were closed to

external objects, as in deep sleep. 2. The reflective and discursive faculty was still and inactive. 3. The spiritual faculty was awakened to the highest state of energy. Hence the prophets' visions are often unconnected and fragmentary, inasmuch as they are not the subject of the reflective but of the perceptive faculty. Hence, too, the imagery with which the prophetic writings are colored, and the dramatic cast in which they are moulded. But, granting that a great part of the Divine communications were received by the human instrument in the state of dream, or in the state of ecstasy, still a large portion of them were made to the prophets in their waking and ordinary state.

PROPHETS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

So far as their predictive powers are concerned, the Old Testament prophets find their New Testament counterpart in the writer of the Apocalypse; but in their general character, as specially illumined revealers of God's will, their counterpart will rather be found, first in the Great Prophet of the Church, and his forerunner, John the Baptist, and next in all those persons who were endowed with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit in the apostolic age, the speakers with tongues, and the interpreters of tongues, the prophets and the discerners of spirits, the teachers and workers of miracles. That, beside the instance of John the Revelator, predictive powers did occasionally exist in the New Testament prophets, is proved by the case of Agabus, but this was not their characteristic. The prophets of the New Testament were supernaturally enlightened expounders and preachers.

RELATION OF THE PROPHETIC OFFICE TO THE PRIESTHOOD.

The prophetical office, shorn of its miraculous character, has in a certain sense been continued in the Christian Church. But, as an institution, the power of the Jewish priesthood passed away at the close of the Jewish dispensation. The

prophetic office contained in it elements in their own nature universal and eternal. The Jewish priesthood was essentially Oriental, local, national, temporary. These orders were in a measure antagonistic, and the priesthood was held in check by the prophets. The vices, even the idolatries, of the kingdom of Judah received hardly any rebuke from the priests. They served, as it would appear, the altars of the false gods, as well as of the true. The whole sacrificial system to which they administered awakened, in the highest spirits of the Jewish Church itself, a feeling almost amounting to aversion. Its inferiority to the rest of the Mosaic revelation is stated by the prophets in the strongest terms: "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices." "Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou didst not desire." "Was it to me that ye offered sacrifices and burnt-offerings during the forty years in the wilderness?" "I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats." "I hate and despise your feast-days." In one remarkable passage, ascribed to Asaph the Psalmist, God is described as descending on Mount Zion, in storm and fire, as He had before descended on Mount Sinai, and declaring not merely in the presence of His own people, but to the whole universe, a deeper and wider law even than that of Moses. He, the Lord of the world, stood in no need of sacrifices. It was not to be thought that He, to whom belonged the numberless cattle that strayed over hill and forest, could desire to devour the flesh of bulls, or drink the warm blood of the goat. The only sacrifice which He could value was that of thanksgiving, of prayer, and of a life just, pure, tender and true. And differing as the priesthood did from all Christian ministers, they may yet learn a lesson from it. Any religious institution which has an outward organization and a long traditional sanctity must, in some degree, be exposed to the tendency of resting, like the Jewish priesthood, in the substitution of

dogma, ceremony, antiquity, for morality and devotion. That the Levitical ritual should, even in the very time of its importance and usefulness, have called down such denunciations from the prophets, is one of the strongest warnings which the Bible contains against the letter, the form, the husk of religion, however near its connection with the most sacred truths. The crime of Caiaphas is the last culminating proof that the opposition of the prophets to the growth of the priestly and sacrificial system was based on an eternal principle.

But it needs to be said that, when out of the ruin of the Jewish Church the Christian Church arose, the priesthood was the one fragment of the ancient system standing out in unbroken strength, on which to hang the new truths which the Jewish apostles had to present to their countrymen, and at the same time, in doing so, to teach authoritatively that its mission was accomplished. and that thenceforth it, with all the Mosaic ritual, should cease forever. These followers of Jesus, and founders of the Christian Church, indeed, by the spirit that was in them (their master in the highest sense of all), continued the line of the prophets far more directly than they could be said to continue or even to use the merely national and local institution of the priesthood; still, for most purposes of outward illustration, the priesthood was more available than the prophetic office. The very destruction which was impending over it rendered more imperative the need of showing how completely all that it expressed, or could possibly express, was answered in the Christian dispensation, not by any earthly or ecclesiastical organization, but by the spiritual nearness to God, which, through the life and death of Christ, had been communicated to all who shared in His Spirit.

BOLDNESS OF THE PROPHETS.

Of them it may be said: "They know not to give flattering titles; in so doing" they feel, "that their Maker would soon

take them away." With God vertical over their head in all their motions, miserable courtiers and sycophants they would have made, even if such base avenues to success had been always open before them. They are the stern rebukers of wickedness in high places, the unhired advocates of the oppressed and the poor; and fully do they purchase a title to the charge of being "troublers of Israel," disturbing it as the hurricane the elements and haunts of the pestilence. All classes, from the King of Samaria to the drunkard of Ephraim, from the Babylonian Lucifer, son of the morning, to the meanest, mincing and wanton-eyed daughter of Zion, with her round tire, like the moon—kings, priests, peasantry, goldsmiths and carpenters—men and women, countrymen and foreigners, must listen and tremble, when they smite with their hand and stamp with their foot. In them the conscience of the people found an incarnation, and stood at the corner of every street, to deplore degeneracy, to expose imposture, to blast the pretenses and the minions of despotism, to denounce every kind and degree of sin, and to point, with a finger that never shook, to the unrepealed code of Moses, and to the law written on the fleshly tablets of the heart, as the standards of rectitude. "Where," asks one, "in modern ages, can we find a class exerting or aspiring to such a province and such a power? Individuals of prophetic mood we have had and have. We have had a Milton, 'wasting his life' in loud or silent protest against that age of 'evil days and evil tongues,' on which he had fallen. We have had a Cowper, lifting up 'expostulations,' not unheard, to his degraded country. We have had an Edward Irving, his 'neck clothed with thunder,' and his loins girt with the 'spirit and power of Elias,' pealing out harsh truth, till he sank down, wearied and silent, in death. We have still a Thomas Carlyle, who, from the study where he might have trained himself for a great artist, has come forth, and standing by the wayside, has uttered the old laws of justice and of retribution, with such force and earnestness

that they seem new and burning 'burdens' as if from the mountains of Israel. But we have not, and never have had a class *anointed* and *consecrated* by the *hand of God* to the *utterance of eternal truth*, as *immediately taught them from behind and above*, speaking, moving, looking, gesticulating and acting, 'as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' OUR POETS have, in general, been beautiful mirrors of the beautiful—elegant and tuneful minstrels that could play well on an instrument, and that were to the world as a 'very lovely song'—not men persecuted and chased into utterance by the apparition behind them of the true. OUR STATESMEN, as a class, have been cold temporizers, mistaking craft for wisdom, success for merit, and the putting off of the evil day for success. Our mental philosophers have done little else than translate into ingenious jargon the eldest sentiments and intuitive knowledge of humanity; they have taught men to lisp of the Infinite by new methods, and to babble of the Eternal in terms elaborately and artistically feeble. OUR PREACHERS, as a body, have been barely faithful to their brief, and they have found that brief in the compass of a confession, rather than in the pages of the Bible, shown and expounded in the light of the great God-stricken soul within. BUT OUR PROPHETS, WHERE ARE THEY? Where many who resemble those wild, wandering, but holy flames of fire, which once ran along the highways, the hills and the market places of Palestine? Instead, what find we? For the most part, an assortment of all varieties of scribbling, scheming, speculating and preaching machines, the most active of whose movements form the strongest antithesis to true life. Even the prophetic men among us display rather the mood than the insight of prophecy, rather its fire than its light, and rather its fury than its fire; rather a yearning after than a feeling of the stoop of the descending God. We are compelled to take the complaint of the ancient seer, with a yet bitterer feeling than his:

"'Our signs we do not now behold,
There is not us among
A prophet more, nor any one
That knows the time how long.'

And we must even return, and sit at the feet of those bards of Israel who, apart from their supernatural pretensions, as teachers, as poets, as truthful and earnest men, stand as yet alone, unsurmounted and unapproached, the Himalayan mountains of mankind."

In the sphere of religion the prophets were omnipotent, and they included every question of right and wrong in this sphere. Whatever affected man's welfare it was their province to touch. The *present questions of the age* were emphatically those which formed the burden of their preaching. And this is one test to apply in every age to distinguish the false prophet from the true. But let us not think too hardly of the MODERN MINISTER—of him who in our own time claims to be the ambassador of God. Amid the abounding temptations to prophesy smooth things, to seek only that the flock be kept in good condition, and its fleece be seasonably marketed, there are those now just as well as in the times of Elijah and Jeremiah, who hold their commission direct from Jehovah, who acknowledge no master but Him, who speak to the rights and wrongs of the present hour, who believe that in preaching the Gospel they are to preach down all that is evil, and to preach up all that is good. And if there are others who, from lack of principle or comprehension, conduct their ministry upon another method, is the whole profession to be stigmatized for their shortcomings? It is easy, indeed, to understand the contempt which honest men feel for those who, with the cry "preach the Gospel," turn away from the duty of dealing with sin as it exists in their own land, and in their own congregations. Called to preach the Gospel, the prophet of the present age is—called to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, to make known the mercy of the compas-

sionate Saviour, to cheer the penitent with a full absolution from sin, and the bright hope of endless purity and joy—but he is called also to battle with evil existing now, as Christ and the prophets who went before Him battled with the evils of their day.

It is incorrect, then, to allege, with the writer quoted above, that we have no prophets now. In the ranks of the ministry, and out of it, according to the wants of our time, and modified by its characteristics, are to be found those who are substantially the successors of the prophets. The age of inspiration is past, but God never leaves the world without moral leaders. And if these are not stoned or sawn asunder or crucified *now*, it is partly, let us hope, because the age is better, and partly because this is not the mode in which the age punishes those who oppose its spirit and rebuke its sins.

That there is much in the ministry to deplore, those who are in it know better than those who are without. But the self-denial and abundant labors of a considerable portion of the profession must be equally plain to those who wish to see. Let justice be done to a multitude of hard-working, underpaid pastors, who, through evil report and good report, are laboring to advance that kingdom which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Let none, with undiscriminating censure, confound the noble and the base, the humble and the haughty, the hireling and the faithful servant of God and man. Now, as ever, the ranks of the clergy contain some of the noblest of men, some of the ablest defenders of human rights, some of the purest examples of unselfishness —men who love and serve Christ and humanity—men who keep alive our faith in human nature, and our faith in God. Upon these the eye of the Master rests. To them, occupying the place that is obscure, or the place that is conspicuous, suffering the temptations and bearing the hardships belonging to the one or the other position, He speaks through the last

of the prophets, as He is closing the inspired volume that is to be the hand-book and the solace of their ministry: "Behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

"EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."

THE PROPHET OF THE LAW.

MOSES SMITING THE ROCK.

I.

MOSES.

His Birth—His Beauty—The Boat of Bulrushes—**Adopted by Pharaoh's** Daughter—Educated in the Wisdom of the Egyptians—A Great General—Marries an Ethiopian Princess—Slays an Egyptian—His Flight—His Chivalry—Rescues the Maidens from the Bedouins—Marries, and becomes a Shepherd—The Burning Bush—Called to Deliver the Hebrews—His Prophetic Character—The Ninetieth Psalm—Historical Writings—Leaves the Seclusion of Pastoral Life—Enters the Third and most Active Division of his History—Appears at the Egyptian Court—Turns Aaron's Staff into a Serpent—The Plagues—Locust Storm—The Passover—The Death of the First-born—The Departure from Egypt—The Pillar of Cloud and of Fire—The Passage of the Red Sea—Bitter Waters made Sweet—Quails and Manna—Water Flows from the Rock—Mount Sinai—The Ten Commandments—Criminal and Civil Code—The Tabernacle—Sin of Moses—Personal Traits—The Closing Scene—View of the Promised Land—Burial of Moses.

"A PROPHET shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me." Thus was Moses type of that great Antitype whose coming he foretold. And save the Divine man of whom he spake in this prophecy, what greater personage than Moses does secular or sacred history hold up to our view? And what narrative so fascinating as that which, beginning with the babe in his boat of bulrushes, carries us along through court and camp, now under the shadow of the Pyramids, and now amid the silence of the desert, and presents, with rapid strokes upon the canvas, the prophet, patriot and philosopher, the historian, divine and warrior, the leader, liberator and law-giver, until a life so illustrious in words and in deeds is crowned with a death and burial unique in glory, and the great founder of a nation destined to score deeper than any other in the world's history is followed to the grave, not with vain funeral pomp—the long

procession of mourners, waving cypress, nodding plumes and riderless charger—mansion, palace, temple and senate-house draped and somber with costliest badges of sorrow, but hidden by God's own hand in the mountain cleft facing Beth-peor, whither the attendant train of angels had swept down from the death-scene on the beetling summit of Nebo.

The story begins in an humble Hebrew household in Egypt. The edict of Pharaoh had gone forth that every male child of the enslaved race should perish as soon as born. Scarcely had this cruel decree been issued when it fell in all its crushing force on a family of the house of Levi. In that family there was already a boy three or four years of age, who had the good fortune to be born before the reign of terror; and a little girl, numbering perhaps twice as many years, a clever, dark-eyed maiden, with a fine ear for music, and, with her sensible, active ways, the help and comfort of her mother. But now, when there should have been great joy in the house, when another was added to the family group, and a little baby brother was given to Miriam and Aaron, instead of joy there was sackcloth, and all was hushed and silent. No neighbor came to congratulate, and it was anything but pride which the poor mother felt as she gazed on the "proper child."

His beauty indeed was extraordinary, and stimulated the mother to unusual efforts for his preservation from the general destruction of the male children of Israel. For three months the child was hid in the house. Day after day passed on, and every day the babe grew more endearing and more beautiful; but every day made concealment more difficult. It was a wonder that no spy nor informant had yet found out the fatal secret; every foot-fall at the door sent panic through the house, and sometimes it was impossible to hush those infant outcries, which, if overheard, would attract the murderer to the cradle, and bring death upon every one of his kindred.

This anxiety could not last. His mother took a small boat or basket of papyrus, closed against the water by bitumen. In this she placed the babe, and with Miriam by her side she set off for the river. You may be sure it was with a bursting heart that the sister thought of the likely fate of that baby brother whom she had so often helped to nurse and dandle. But here was a quiet spot among the aquatic vegetation of the Nile, and though the shore was desolate and the crocodiles were hungry, the basket was deposited among the flags, and the mother departed, unable to bear the sight. The sister lingered to watch her brother's fate. The Egyptian princess came down, after the Homeric simplicity of the age, to bathe in the sacred river. She saw the ark in the reeds, and dispatched an attendant after it. The babe

PLOWING, HOEING AND SOWING.

wept, and her woman's heart was touched. She determined to rear the child as her own. Shrewd Miriam was at hand to recommend a Hebrew nurse. And now the mother joins the group, oh! with what joy! And from amid the grandly dressed and laughing maidens, the king's own daughter gives back the weeping boy to the bosom from which an hour since he had been torn, saying, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."

What an evening was that in the slave-hut of the Hebrews! How eagerly they all by turns embraced and coaxed the little

outcast! How secure the joy of the happy mother as she clasped her own darling, safe beneath the shadow of the throne! How fervent the thanksgiving that ascended to the God of Abraham, who had transformed the ark of bulrushes into a golden cradle, and landed its precious and helpless freight, not in the jaws of some monster of the deep, but in the very precincts of Pharaoh's palace, and the safe and loving sanctuary of a mother's heart!

GOATS TREADING IN GRAIN.

And now this bright boy is to be "educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," to fit him for the transcendent part he is to play in the world's history. That broad brow, betokening a massive intellect, which is to mould his nation and mankind, must bend over the symbols of a learning vaster than we, at this distance of time, can comprehend.

The Egyptians are the earliest people known to us as a nation, and more refined and intelligent than any race of which we possess the memorials. While Abraham and his countrymen were moving about in tents and wagons, the Egyptians were living in cities, and enjoying all the advantages of a settled government and established laws. They had already cultivated agriculture, and parcelled out the rich valley of the Nile into farms. While their neighbors knew of no property but herds and movables, they reverenced a landmark as a god, and looked upon its destroyer as an atheist.

They had invented hieroglyphics, and improved them into syllabic writing, and almost into an alphabet, long before any form of written language was known elsewhere in the world. They had invented records, and they wrote their kings' names and actions on the massive temples which they raised. We cannot tell the ages which it had taken them to make this progress in civilization; but the whole Hebrew people, and especially Moses, were brought under its influence. Proficients, as the Egyptians were, in masonry and the mechanic arts, weaving that fine linen which all antiquity regarded as

SPHINX AND PYRAMIDS.

the glory of the loom, and rearing those enormous structures which are still the wonder of the world—musicians, armorers and jewelers, there was scarcely an art which its industrious citizens did not practice, and which an observant Hebrew might not acquire.

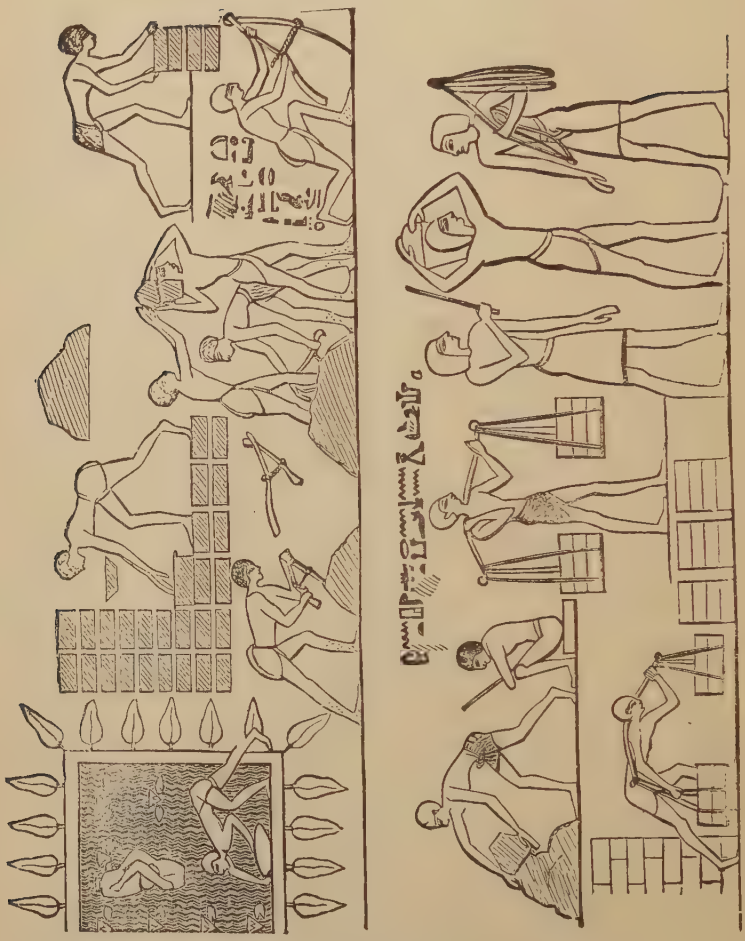
But in addition to this, Moses was brought up a member of the privileged class, and in the very palace of the king. Adopted by one of the royal family, his princess-mother ob-

tained for him the best instructors. His education went on under the shadow of the great Pyramid, which already had stood for a thousand years, a mountain of masonry, a furlong in length and breadth, and amid temples which covered acres of ground, and where colossal figures towered up a hundred feet in height, and all the opulence and activity of the present were visibly linked to a remote and stupendous past. He was taught to read the curious character to which Egyptian sages had consigned their speculations and their learning, and taught also to commit his own meditations to a scroll of papyrus. He was initiated in that geometry which the land-surveying exigencies of their inundated valley made so necessary, and in the cognate astronomy in which they were wonderful adepts, and in the processes of their practical chemistry, which had already presented them with glass and bronze and many pure and exquisite pigments, and which enabled him afterward, before Sinai, to reduce to dust the golden image which Aaron had made for the idolatrous worship of the people while he was with God in the mount.

But scholarship alone would not qualify Moses for the work before him, and as years went on he had an opportunity of earning distinction as a warrior. We are informed by the Jewish historian, Josephus, that the Ethiopians made an incursion into Egypt, and routed the army which was sent to resist them. Panic spread over the country, and Pharaoh trembled at the approach of the swarthy savages, who were already close to Memphis. At this critical juncture the command was entrusted to Moses, who at once took the field, and by a rapid though round-about march, surprised the enemy, defeated them with heavy slaughter, drove them back into their own territories, and followed them up so hard, capturing one city after another, that they found no asylum till they reached the swamp-girdled city of Meroe. Here Moses sat down with his army, and the siege was brought to a speedy conclusion by his gaining the affections of an Ethiopian lady,

whom he promised to marry, provided she put them in the way of entering the city. Her admiration of the handsome Hebrew was too strong for her patriotism, and the conqueror returned from his triumphant campaign, bringing with him his sable princess and the spoils of Meroe, and filling the minds of all his countrymen with hope and exultation. Successful thus in war, the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, it seemed not improbable that he might succeed to her father's throne. The Hebrews had a mysterious aptitude for rising. The slave-boy Joseph had risen to be viceroy of Egypt. Might not he, more fortunate, aspire a step higher, and rise to be king? But no, his sympathies are with his own oppressed nation. Neither his rank and education as a prince of Egypt, nor the pride and pomp and pleasures of a palace, had made him ashamed of his race, or indifferent to their cruel sufferings. The thought of them haunted his pillow by night, and engaged his anxious reflections by day. It needed but a spark, the touch of a match, to kindle a flame that would consume whatever selfishness held him back from making common cause with his people, and burn up the last threads that bound him to the palace and the household of Pharaoh.

And this purpose was served by a sight he happened to see one day. He had gone out to his brethren to look on their burdens, when it chanced that an Egyptian was smiting a Hebrew. He felt every blow that fell on the poor crouching slave. The fated hour had come. With a quick glance, he satisfied himself that there were no witnesses in sight, then flung himself into the fray. Bestriding his kinsman as a champion, it was a small affair to fell the brutal taskmaster to the earth, and a few moments sufficed to obliterate all traces of the transaction by hiding the body in the sand. In thus identifying himself with his people, and espousing their cause, he risks his own life; he casts away riches, honors, rank, and perhaps a crown—all to right the wrongs of a bleeding wretch in whom his piety recognized a child of God,



MAKING BRICKS IN EGYPT.[1]

and his patriotism a countryman and a brother. In the words of St. Paul, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, re-

[1] We have here depicted a group of bondmen, measuring out the clay, moulding it into blocks, carrying away on yokes the finished bricks, and piling them, under the eyes of their Egyptian taskmasters, who, rod in hand, look on at their leisure. These cuts are *fac similes* from ancient monuments, and are introduced because they give a more exact idea of the arts, manners, etc., of that remote period than can be obtained from any other source.

fused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." Nursed on the lap of luxury, for principle, for conscience, and in obedience to the call of humanity, he embraced adversity, bid farewell to his kind foster-mother, farewell to his dreams of ambition, farewell to his prospects of greatness and to all the pleasures of sin.

And in this the nobility of Moses and his chivalrous character is apparent, that he had all to lose and could gain nothing by casting in his lot with a half million of slaves, from whom he might plead that Providence had signally separated him, and marked him out for a different and immeasurably higher life. But between Egypt with its treasures, the prospect of rising to the highest rank in a nation the most renowned and the proudest on the earth, the society of sages, the splendor of a palace, the glories of a princely equipage, the shouts of the admiring populace; and Goshen with its slaves, the fellowship of thralls, with all generosity and spirit, all taste and intelligence crushed out of them, with bread of tears in lieu of royal dainties, and instead of floating down the Nile in golden barges amid the strains of voluptuous music, scorching in the brick-field amid the groans of companions in captivity; betweeen that picture so bright with all that could dazzle the fancy and lure the senses, and this so gloomy and revolting, Moses hesitated not, but made honorable choice, and decision that though rife with peril and suffering for the present life, was fraught with honor and glory for eternity.

Thus the choice and the career of Moses are notable for this, that coming forth to liberate his people, and to write his name highest on the list of the world's benefactors, he came not from the hardening influences of poverty, where the character acquires a rugged strength, but from the enervating

influences of wealth, and ease, and luxury, which commonly unfit men for grand achievements.

You look not for the eagle in the soft-lined nest, swaying in the spring zephyr on the branch by your door. The pretty songsters of the summer may be nurtured in some quiet dell, or beside some placid stream. Not thus the mighty condor of the Andes. Comes his daring but majestic swoop from any but the cloud-capped summit of some lofty Chimborazo? Standing on the highest point that human foot has trodden, you will see his eyrie still above you, and the monarch of the air hovering over heights that are inaccessible to man. Serene as the snow-capped summits around him, he sails alone where the eye of man cannot pierce, looks upon the sun with undazzled vision, and in an untroubled atmosphere sees the lightnings leap and play, and hears the thunder burst and the hurricane roar far below him. Is he nursed for this in the pretty nest, amid green leaves and golden tassels, and the perfume of flowers, where soft and warm, the mother-bird of sweet voice, and short and feeble flight, rears her tender brood? No, his cradle is an open shelf, his nest a few rough sticks spread on the naked rock, and exposed to the rains that seam the mountain-side, and the blast that howls along the ravine. By such hard nursing the eagle is bred, and by the buffetings of adversity *men* are made. Few become capable of great deeds while treading the primrose paths of dalliance, or emerge from a life of ease and affluence and culture into the arena of high and noble achievement. All honor, then, to the chosen few, of whom Moses is the bright exemplar, who, reared in downy nests, and used to sunny skies, can yet, when wild winds roar, with strong wings cleave the clouds, and breast and ride upon the storm.

Of such magnanimity, history furnishes no instance equal to that of the foster-son of the Egyptian Princess. Bred in a palace, he espoused the cause of the people. Reared in

a school of despots, he became the brave champion of liberty. Long associated with oppressors, he took the side of the down-trodden. Educated as the son of a princess, he forfeited her favor to maintain the rights of the poor. With a crown in prospect, he had the magnanimity to choose a cross. And for God and his kinsmen he abandoned ease, refinement, luxuries, and the highest earthly honors, to be a houseless wanderer.

AN EGYPTIAN CARRYING CAKES TO THE OVEN.

But in taking his own high spirit as the rule, Moses miscalculated the mettle of his countrymen. Not only was there no readiness to rise against their taskmasters, but there was no honorable feeling among themselves. The man whom his ready stroke had rescued from blows and bruises, and perhaps from death, had perilled his benefactor's life by noising abroad the matter; and when on a subsequent occasion, he sought to separate two Hebrew combatants, he was met with the rough retort, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?"

And so began the self-sacrificing and ill-requited labors of Moses for his people. Intermitted during his residence among the quiet hills of Midian, and resumed after the appearance of Jehovah to him in the bush, for forty long years what reward did Moses receive for these labors but abuse, murmurs, opposition, unjust suspicion, and repeated attempts on his life? But the path upon which he had entered he pursued to the grave, with a pure, unselfish patriotism which no time could weaken, nor injustice and ingratitude cool He identified himself completely with his nation, preferred

the interests of his countrymen to his own, and like the blessed Redeemer, not only bore much for them, but bore much from them. With what meekness he met their insolence, with what patience their provocations, with what forgiveness their ingratitude; and when God, provoked to cast them off, offered to make of him a great nation, with what noble generosity did he intercede on their behalf, refusing to build his own house on the ruins of theirs.

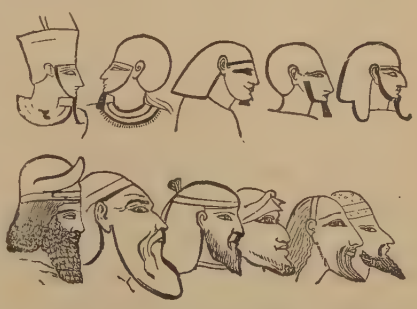
The fact of his killing the Egyptian having transpired, nothing was left for Moses but to seek safety in flight. And it is characteristic of the fairness and candor of the Scripture history, that his flight is attributed to the malignity of his countrymen rather than to the envy and hatred of the Egyptians. He set out from Egypt a houseless wanderer—

> "The world was all before him where to choose
> His place of rest, and Providence his guide."

And that guide led him to a silent and lonely region near the Peninsula of Sinai, a district extremely desolate and solemn—lofty mountains raising their sharp ribs and bald summits far into the sky, where the pilgrim might pass many days without looking upon the face of man; seldom a living creature to be seen except the lizard looking timidly from under the stone, or a rabbit, as timid, venturing forth for a furtive nibble in the cool of the day; seldom a sound to be heard except the rare murmur of the bee among the acacia blooms, or the tinkle of the sand as it slid tunefully down the slopes of the granite—the desert's musical hour-glass—an oratory vast and tranquil and unprofaned, and with its absence of idols, a pleasant contrast to Egypt—where, for the next forty years, Moses was destined to spend many a day of exalted communion with Abraham's God and his own, and where, before the history ended, he should see the mountains shake, and hear those hushed valleys re-echo to the trumpet of angels and the voice of Jehovah.

One day he reached a little oasis in the desert, with a

famous well surrounded by tanks for the watering of the flocks of the Bedouin herdsmen. By this well the fugitive seated himself, and watched the gathering of the sheep. There were the Arabian shepherds, and there were also seven maidens, whom the shepherds rudely drove away from the water. The chivalrous spirit which had already broken forth in behalf of his oppressed countrymen, broke forth again in behalf of the distressed maidens. With his native gallantry, and his high-spirited resistance to wrong, Moses felt outraged, and whether it was awe for the magnificent man, or respect for his Egyptian uniform, the churls fell back, and conceded to the terrible stranger what they would not have yielded to manly feeling, or even the more common-place regard for fair play. This characteristic action introduced its author to Raguel or Jethro, and he was rewarded with a home in a good man's house, and in the midst of a family where the true God was feared and worshiped.



BEARDS, EGYPTIAN AND OTHER NATIONS.

It was a great change from the court-end of Memphis—the fashionable quarter of Egypt's metropolis—to the back of the desert; it was a great change from a palace to the scanty accommodation of a tent, and from commanding an army, it was a greater change to herding sheep. But the mind is its own kingdom, and the greatest minds are the least dependent on outward accommodations. The pleasures of Egypt were far from unalloyed. They were too much the joys of sense, and were so mixed up with idolatrous observances as to pollute and poison them all, and make them "the pleasures of sin." But with the meditative leisure he enjoyed among the lonely mountains, with the piety which he found

in the homestead of the priest of Midian, and with the domestic affection to which he returned when, in the cool of th day, he brought back his flock to the canvas village, and Zipporah and his boy came forth to meet him, he was thankful for his peaceful seclusion, and felt what another was afterward to sing, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters, He maketh me to walk in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

In these pastoral pursuits the years glided smoothly on. At length came an eventful day, and yet a day ushered in by no special sign nor devoted to any unusual solemnity. Moses had led out his flock as far as Sinai, where in some of the ravines could be found a fragrant pasture for the goats and the sheep, and where there was a good store of water. The Lord was about to appear to him in the flame. It was a sword of fire which guarded the gates of Eden. It was in a chariot of fire that Elijah ascended to heaven. It was a pillar of fire which guided the pilgrims in their desert journey, and which afterward settled down between the cherubim in the Holy of Holies. It was with tongues of fire that the Holy Spirit symbolized His presence on the day of Pentecost. And it was with an effulgence beyond the noon that the fury-breathing persecutor was dashed down on the way to Damascus. So that the element which we deem the purest and the most penetrating, Jehovah seems to have employed as His special badge and cognizance, the opening of His eye, the flash of His finger.

But of this Moses was not thinking, when a great sight arrested his eye. A bush, no palm nor olive, but a tamarisk, or a thorny acacia, shone out with a brilliant flame. It did not crackle nor burn down, and Moses was hastening to the spot, when his foot was arrested by a voice Divine, a voice which soon brought him to the dust, hiding his face and fearing to look upon God. In the wonderful interview which

followed, the Lord announced His name and the purpose for which he had now appeared to His servant, and with marvelous condesension meeting all the scruples of a meek and self-disparaging recluse, He sent him home the most highly favored and heavily burdened among the sons of men; the most highly favored, inasmuch as he was the first to whom, after the silence of ages, Jehovah had spoken; the most heavily burdened, inasmuch as he felt crushed and overwhelmed with the commission which he dared not lay down, and which he trembled to discharge.

Two signs accompanied these Divine communications to Moses, the one characteristic of his past life in Egypt, the other of his life as a shepherd. In the rush of leprosy into his hand is the link between him and the people whom the Egyptians called a nation of lepers. In the transformation of his shepherd's staff is the glorification of the simple pastoral life, of which that staff was the symbol, into the great career which lay before him. And in addition to these two miracles, the Lord gifted him with the power of working a third, the turning of water into blood, so that he should go to his countrymen with three portable miracles as credentials —with the power of performing three prodigies, which should be as well adapted to the untutored minds of his brethren as the beautiful sign of the burning bush was to his own. "Turn that rod into a serpent, and from a serpent back into a rod again. Draw thy hand from thy bosom, it is leprous; do it again and it is sound. Change the water of the Nile into blood. If they will not believe *thee*, they will believe the *sign;* and if one sign fail, a second will succeed."

EGYPTIAN BASKETS.

That burning bush laid a lasting hold on the memory and the imagination of Moses. When his commission was ended, when about to lay down his miraculous rod, and recalling how not one of the good things which God had spoken had failed, and how all the difficulties which his own timidity had conjured up had disappeared, he reverted to this memorable scene, and in blessing all the tribes, the best blessing he could wish for Joseph was "the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush." Apart from all its adjuncts the sight was striking. In connection with the affliction in Egypt, and the deliverance which from that instant dated, it was a sight never to be forgotten, and profoundly significant. "The bush burned," it did not simply gleam with a mere phosphorescent or lambent light, but it "burned with fire." And it was with Moses an amazement how so fierce a flame could involve the branches and yet leave them fresh and green. Assuredly a sign, it was a symbol also; not merely a prodigy, but a lesson to the eye, a symbol interpreted when from the burning bush Jehovah said, "I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters." Israel in the furnace of Egyptian bondage, was emblemed by the bush preserved amidst the fire, burning yet not consumed. And the Church of God in all ages and in all lands has had a similar preservation to record. Made up of all true believers by whatever name called, and dwelling in whatever heathen or Christian lands, God has been with it, and the fires of persecution have raged in vain.

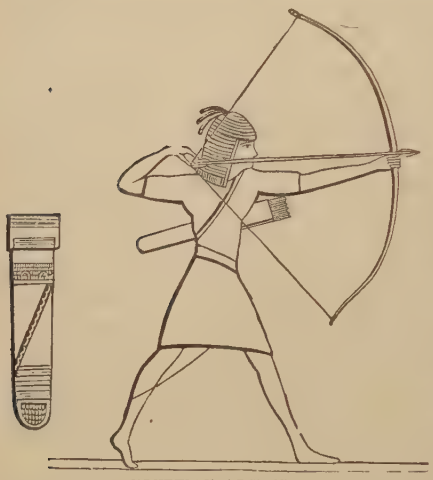
And the individual believer, like the collective company of God's people, may be compared to this bush. Like the lowly shrub in Horeb, you feel small compared with the trees of the wood. Your abode is obscure, your attainments humble. You are a root out of a dry ground, and growing where there are few advantages. And to make you more anxious, the fire has kindled upon you. You are in straits

in grievous perplexity and trouble. You are in pain yourself, or in deep distress on account of others—in the furnace of affliction, as we say. Perhaps you are assaulted by fiery darts of Satan, fierce temptations, allurements to some great wickedness, till, in the red-hot rain, you feel as if you must be utterly consumed. But call on God, and He will come to your rescue. The bush may be in the fire, but if God be in the bush it runs no risk; the flame that laps it round may consume the canker-worms and caterpillars that prey upon its verdure, but they will not scorch the tiniest sprig nor consume the most tender blossom. There is no affliction so severe but under it God can support, and carry you out of it more than a conqueror. There is no furnace so hot as to consume a hair of your head if the Son of God be with you there. Whether it be the frail body of an afflicted believer, or the twigs and tendrils of a bush in the desert, which forms the place of God's special in-dwelling, no fire of earth or hell can hurt a living shrine of the God-head, or consume a temple of the Holy Ghost.

There is something wonderfully sublime and spirit-filling in the name by which the Most High announced Himself to Moses in the bush, and by which, in its form of Jehovah, He is designated throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. "I am that I am," the Self-existent, the Immutable, the Eternal, the one living God, to the exclusion of the lords many, which Egypt and the other idolaters adored. But self-sufficing as His perfections are, His compassions are as great, and most gracious and forthgoing His propensities. The plenitude of His own joy occasions no indifference to the cry of the Hebrew bondmen—the absoluteness of His perfections is itself a necessity for fulfilling the promise to the patriarchs. And nothing in the Divine nature is so august or so glorious but it may become to the believer the theme of pleasing contemplation; and frail mortals as we are, we may be taken up into God's eternity, and find within His

unchanging name our impregnable and immortal dwelling place.

At the bush begins the prophet-life of Moses, and it is a fitting place to sum up what is said in the Scriptures about his prophetic character. He is the first, as he is the greatest example of a prophet in the Old Testament. In a certain sense, he appears as the center of a prophetic circle. His brother and sister were both endowed with prophetic gifts. Eldad and Medad and the seventy elders all prophesied. But Moses rose high above all these. With him the Divine revelations were made "mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and he beheld the similitude of Jehovah." Of the especial modes of this direct communication, four great examples are given, corresponding to four critical epochs in his historical career. First, the appearance of the Divine presence in the flaming acacia tree, which we have just noticed. No form is described. The angel or messenger is spoken of as being "in the flame." Secondly, in the giving of the law from Mt. Sinai, the outward form of the revelation was a thick darkness as of a thunder-cloud out of which proceeded a voice. The revelation on this occasion was especially of the name of Jehovah. On two occasions Moses is described as having penetrated within the darkness, and remained there successively for two periods of forty days, of which the second was spent in absolute seclusion and fasting. Thirdly, it was nearly at the close of these communi-



EGYPTIAN ARCHER.

cations in the mountains of Sinai that an especial revelation was made to him personally. In the despondency produced by the apostasy of the molten calf, he besought Jehovah to show him His glory. The Divine answer announced that an actual vision of God was impossible. "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see my face and live." He was commanded to hew two blocks of stone like those which he had destroyed. He was to come absolutely alone. He took his place on "the rock," that is, on a rock so well known or prominent as to be thus designated. The cloud passed by. A voice proclaimed the two immutable attributes of God, Justice and Love, in words which became part of the religious creed of Israel and of the world. Fourthly, immediately after the catastrophe of the worship of the calf, and apparently in consequence of it, Moses removed the chief tent outside the camp, and invested it with a sacred character, under the name of "The Tent or Tabernacle of the Congregation." This tent became henceforth the chief scene of his communications with God. And now a peculiarity is mentioned which apparently had not been seen before. On his final descent from Mt. Sinai, after his second long seclusion, a splendor shone on his face, as if from the glory of the Divine Presence.

The prophetical office, as represented in the history of Moses, included the poetical form of composition which characterizes the Jewish prophecy generally. These poetical utterances enter so largely into the full biblical conception of his character, that we shall mention them here. 1. The song which Moses and the children of Israel sung after the passage of the Red Sea. This is the oldest piece of poetry extant. 2. A fragment of a war-song against Amalek, Exodus xvii. 16. 3. A fragment of a lyrical burst of indignation, Exodus xxxii. 18. 4. Fragments of war-songs, and the address to the well, in the 21st chapter of Numbers, and emanating probably either from Moses or his immediate prophetic followers. 5. The song of Moses, setting forth the

greatness and the failings of Israel, and abounding both in the beautiful and the sublime. 6. The blessing of Moses on the tribes, Deut. 33d chapter. 7. The 90th Psalm, a prayer of Moses the man of God. Of this we propose to speak somewhat more in detail. Although some difficulties have been started about the authorship of this Psalm, there seems no reason to doubt that it is the composition of Moses. As such, though probably of a more recent date than the song of triumph at the Red Sea, it is yet one of the oldest poems in the world. Compared with it Homer and Pindar are modern, and even King David is of recent date. That is to say, the other psalms are as much more modern than this ancient hymn, as Tennyson and Longfellow are more modern than Chaucer. In either case there are nearly five centuries between.

The occasion on which it was written can only be conjectured, but from internal evidence we should say it was toward the end of the sojourn in the wilderness, when the greater part of those who came out of Egypt had perished, and perhaps among the living only two besides Moses had attained the age of fourscore. He indeed had nearly made out the *sixscore* years, but this only made him the more lonely, the greater contrast to the youthful race which had started up around him. In the million of human beings which formed the great Hebrew encampment, there was no one with whom in the days of his youth the Psalmist had been acquainted. As if a flood had swept over the scene, that race had been carried completely away, and now he was left at once a spectator and a spectacle, in the midst of a race none of whom had known him when young, like the primeval oak or elm looking down on a whole upstart forest, and himself the venerable monument of a generation which had utterly vanished. Nothing can be more pathetic than this psalm, nor anything more expressive than the imagery under which the shortness of our earthly existence is described.

Compared with the years of the eternal it is nothing. Even though the thousand years of Adam and Methusaleh were still vouchsafed, they would pass—and after they were past, they would look no more than a rapid and returnless "yesterday." Life, he says, is like "a watch in the night." The weary warrior lays him down, and he fancies he has hardly closed his eyes, when he is roused to take his turn in the trenches, or relieve the sentinel on the battlements, or join the forlorn hope, the storming party in the escalade. And like such a short "sleep" is our mortal history. We have had some pleasant dreams, and others rather frightful, when we wake up and see a ghastly apparition bending over us. "What, O death! is that you already? It cannot possibly be time." And he answers, "Yes, indeed. The tale is told; the night is spent; you must turn out into the morning. The time has passed more rapidly than you think. Look at the clock and you will see that it has come to threescore and ten. Look into the mirror and you will see that there are snows upon your head, that there are furrows on your brow, that there are crows'-feet in the corners of your eyes."

From the wreck and desolation all around him, the Psalmist lifts his eyes to that true and only Potentate, who alone hath immortality. Of all the godly generations God is the eternal home. Nothing which He once blesses with His friendship is ever blotted out of being. The tabernacle is gone, but the pilgrim lives. The tent is torn and scattered amongst the elements, but the pilgrim has exchanged its frail and flimsy shelter for a house eternal. He has got better than any building made with hands, for he has passed in beneath the covert of the Almighty, and will henceforth have that home which God had for Himself before the mountains were brought forth, or ever He had formed the earth and the world.

But if man be so ephemeral, life so fleeting—"Lord, teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Children learn numbers as soon as they begin to

prattle, and we do not need an instructor to teach us to count a hundred on our fingers. So much the more shameful is our stupidity in never comprehending the short term of our own life. Men can measure all distances outside of themselves; they can tell how far asunder are the several planets, and how many miles it is from the center of the moon to the center of the earth, but they cannot measure the threescore years and ten which divide their cradle from their grave. So it is well for us to ask from God the Divine wisdom which shall make us skillful in this celestial computation.

But we pass from the poetical compositions of Moses, to consider his historical writings, which are probably to be referred to the period of his residence in Midian. We have traced his fortunes up to that time, and have seen something of the preparation for authorship which his training in Egypt would give him. We have seen him growing up a scholar, an inquiring spirit, intellectual and well-informed, initiated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, acquainted with geometry and the movements of the heavenly bodies, with the jurisprudence and chronology of that wise and ancient people. But although adorned with these "Egyptian jewels," we have seen how his heart continued leal to his people, and how, disdaining the bribes of ambition, he quitted the tyrant's palace a Hebrew and a patriot. We have seen how the active and athletic frame into which his goodly childhood had grown, was animated by the soul of a hero. And we have seen him a fugitive and an exile, escaping to a sublime but lonely region, and finding an asylum in a good man's tent, where amidst simple pursuits, domestic affections, and the society of those by whom the true God was known and worshiped, Egypt and its enjoyments, if not Egypt and its captivities, could easily be forgotten.

Here it was, we believe, that he wrote the book of Genesis. Without doubt, this is the oldest book extant, if not the first ever written. And before all others in point of time, what

author occupies himself with themes of such surpassing grandeur? It was given to him to record events which, receding into a past and stretching forward into a future eternity, had God for their author, the world for their theater, and for their end the everlasting destinies of mankind. He solves the question of the origin of man. Taught by the Almighty Maker Himself, Moses tells how from earthly elements God formed man's body, and how from God Himself, and His inbreathing, came man's soul. "God made man after His own image." Look round on man as he actually is, too often brutalized, besotted, scant of intellect—and through the disfiguring filth and wretchedness espy the immortal, the runaway child of the Eternal! In the fragments of the crushed jewel, discern something of its original brightness and glory. Behold in your own nature what should make each man a terror and a glory, a grief and a rejoicing, to himself. Is this understanding of mine an image of God's intelligence? this imagination of mine an image of God's immensity? this immortality of mine an image of God's eternity? This soul which I have got—was it made on purpose to love the holy as God loves it? to shed affection and blessing and good-will as these pour with sun-like constancy from God's own beneficence? Was it made to commune with the Most High in lowly confidence and ever-nearing intimacy? Then what a work there is for thee, O Spirit of grace, to bring this nature, so debauched, debased, back to its first estate! And to recover tastes pure and holy, aspirations high and heavenly, what a work is there for myself! *God made man after His own image.* That one sentence at the opening of the Bible gives to mental science new grandeur, and to man himself an awful and august significance. We feel that as God is immortal, man will be.

"Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our home."

And in the great I AM we still shall have life—a life that the death of the body cannot extinguish.

But it is hardly possible in a few flying sentences to present an epitome of the contents of this most comprehensive book. Commencing with the commencement of our human history; nay, we may say commencing with the commencement of the universe—for it tells that the universe is not eternal; it had a beginning, and God is its Creator—commencing with the dawn of human history; it exhibits man at home in the world, with the production of six creative days around him, the plants and animals so various,so beautiful, and so fitted for man's use. There is rest and there is worship, for it is the Sabbath, the first in a long series. Then come work, observation, intelligence, culture, the muster of the animals, named by an acute and friendly naturalist; that tilling and dressing of the ground in which man exercises his delegated faculty as a subordinate creator and improver, making that which is already "good" still better; that social converse which is the still more important culture of himself. Then follows the first sin, the first shame, the first flight from God's presence. Then comes the first death, the dismal death of one who had brought back to earth much of the lost innocence and piety; a death amid blows and bloodshed; a death by that dear hand which in tottering infancy the younger brother had often clasped as much for love as guidance; a death which leaves the afflicted parents doubly desolate, for their one son is in a martyr's early grave, and their other son is the outcast murderer. Sin worketh death, and we have the development in that old world's depravity, till the flood

HIPPOPOTAMUS.

comes and clears it all away. The ark is aground on Ararat, and for a moment there is devotion, there is gratitude. But Noah's altar has scarcely ceased to smoke, and above the dripping crags and from the sundering clouds the rainbow flag has scarcely disappeared, when on the soil of the rescued family sin is sprouting faster than blades of grass are springing from the surface of the soft and reeking earth. And by and by we see the Tower of Babel rising, with its proud effort to lift the name of Nimrod to the stars, and form a capital for all mankind. But lo! by a strange confusion in their speech, we see the centripetal attraction suddenly exchanged for a centrifugal repulsion, and from around the stunted, unfinished tower the vexed and alienated clans are pressing outward, each along his separate radius, to meet no more till one great speech shall reunite the fragments of the exploded family. Having sent forth on their several ways the races still so interesting: those sons of Ham, on whom a father's fault has long pressed heavily; those phlegmatic sons of Shem, with whom India and China are still teeming; and those others with the flowing beard and flashing eye, in whom we still recognize the Arab and the Jew; and last of all, those sons of Japheth, by whom the isles of the Gentiles should be peopled, pilgrims of the square forehead, the sturdy step and iron sinew, having for the present sent away to harden amidst their northern mists and snows these future tutors and rulers of mankind, till such season as they should reappear and take up their residence in the tents of Shem—the record narrows in, and leaving the history of the world, the sacred penman restricts himself to the fortunes of the peculiar people. And for nine-and-thirty chapters, that history is rather a succession of family records than the annals of a nation. Patriarch follows patriarch, and many an incidental personage flits across the scene. But even at the last the clan only musters threescore souls and ten, and it is only in the four centuries which lie betwixt Genesis and Exodus that the Abra

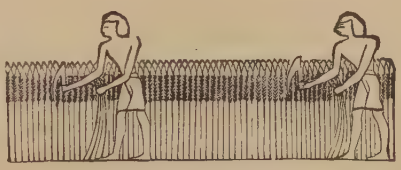
hamic clan has grown into the great and numerous Hebrew nation.

It is at this point that Moses lays down the pen and appears upon the stage himself as chief actor. Having completed his account of the leading events in the world's history prior to his day—himself destined to take a part in events equally momentous with those which he had chronicled, he enters upon the third and most active division of his life. Forty years he had spent in Egypt, forty in Midian, forty he was to pass as the leader of God's chosen people. For this mission he had been unconsciously preparing in both the former periods of his life. In Egypt he had got some insight into statesmanship and military affairs, and received in his palace life a portion of his training. The science and the jurisprudence of Egypt would be used by him in his future work, so far as they could be made available for this purpose. In leading a million of men out of bondage, in providing for and ruling them forty years in the desert, in moulding them into a nation, in framing for them a code of laws by which they and their children should be governed forever, and which should be the foundation for the jurisprudence of all Christian nations—he would certainly need all that he had acquired of the "wisdom of the Egyptians," as well as a deeper lore than they were able to furnish. And the latter he gained in the desert. In common with most of those who have been called to head great moral revolutions, a period of seclusion and abstraction formed a principal part of his preparation. In communion with God and with nature, in the self-questionings of an absolute privacy and solitude, the spirit is strengthened to contend with error and wrong. And to fit him for the undertaking before him Moses needed a profound and peculiar spiritual discipline. He needed to grow in acquaintance with that God with whom he was hereafter to commune face to face, and whose messenger and spokesman he was to be in a manner so special and pre-eminent. He needed to be lifted

completely and conclusively above those mixed or meaner motives by which well-intentioned men are so often in large measure actuated. He needed to be raised nearer heaven than earth; and we may add, he needed to have his entire spirit so habituated to lofty thoughts, so accustomed and inured to live at a high level, that in after days,

> "As some tall rock amidst the waves
> The fury of the tempest braves,"

so his spirit should be able to surmount the molestations and the murmurs, the opposition and the obloquy, which for the next forty years, like a troubled sea, would chafe and churn around him.



REAPING WHEAT, EGYPT.

For such purpose no retirement could have been more suitable than the desert of Horeb, that "great and terrible wilderness," which travelers describe as, for the most part, a vision of utter barrenness and desolation; with no soft feature in the landscape to mitigate the unbroken horror. No green spot, no tree, no flower, no rill, no lake, but dark brown ridges, red peaks like pyramids of solid fire; no rounded hillocks, or soft mountain curves, such as one sees in the ruggedest of home scenes, but monstrous and misshapen cliffs, rising tier above tier, and surmounted here and there by some spire-like summit, serrated for miles into ragged grandeur, and grooved from head to foot by the winter torrents which have swept down like bursting water-spouts, tearing their naked loins, and cutting into the very veins and sinews of the fiery rock.

Amidst this labyrinth of bald and blasted mountains, Moses dwelt forty years; and although it is vain to surmise what were all the thoughts and musings of this protracted interval, we are inclined to think that a glimpse is given in that

ninetieth Psalm of which we have already spoken, written, no doubt, many years after this, but embodying the reflections of this period, and acquiring a new significance when we think of the hermit lifting up his eyes to these lonely silent pinnacles, and thinking: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." And then, when his thoughts reverted to the wretched scenes in Egypt: "Return, O Lord, how long? And let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants. Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it." Thus the closing paragraph of the Psalm would have reference both to the bondage in Egypt, and the long wandering in the desert, brought on by the cowardice and rebellion of the Israelites.

Perhaps, too, the book of Job was composed by Moses during this period of leisure. It is throughout impregnated with the ideas and usages of the kind of life which he was now leading. But many doubt that he was the author. We do not propose to discuss the question: but if the book was written by him, *this* is the time of his life to which its composition should be assigned.

The sojourn in the land of Midian, while a season of preparation for the more active duties to follow, was doubtless the most delightful portion of Moses' life—happier than when in Egypt, as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he received the homage of servile crowds, while his heart yearned sore after his father's house, and he knew himself the object of secret dislike and envy to those who bowed before him—happier than when in later life the burden of Israel lay upon him, and he felt that burden almost too heavy to bear. This

was the period of his prime. He lived one hundred and twenty years, and this was the middle period of his life. As in a life of sixty years, the time from twenty to forty would be considered the time of the greatest activity, so the Midian life of Moses would, by ordinary rules, have been the period of strongest action, of sternest realities, of most resolute purposes. But in fact it was the period of least apparent action, in which he lived in seclusion and quiet, preferring the humble duties of pastoral life. He married; he had two sons; he led his flock to the pastures and the waters. This forms the history of that period of life which is to other men the time of the most vehement action. The days of his quiet repose and secluded rest preceded instead of following the days of his labor. And the closing epoch of his life was undoubtedly the most active in all his existence.

But obscure and uneventful as was the life of Moses in Midian, and furnishing few materials for biography, it was far from being idle or useless. The duties of pastoral and domestic existence, while they do not involve the labors and responsibilities of him who stands out to take a part in the public life of nations, are still sufficient to occupy—not unpleasantly or uselessly—the time and attention of any man of moderate desires and simple tastes. It is a life, moreover, that affords much leisure for thought and meditation; and hence the distinction which men of pastoral habits have on many occasions acquired. The two greatest men in the Old Testament, Moses and David, were called from following the sheep to be the leaders of God's flock of Israel.

How Moses enjoyed the kind of life he led, and how little he desired to quit it for a wider and grander field of labor, is shown by the manner in which he received the call to proceed to Egypt for the deliverance of Israel. His seclusion was so pleasant to him, that the idea of quitting it to encounter the storms and high tasks of active life, was most alarming when first presented to his mind. We have already described

the appearance of God by a visible emblem in the flame of fire in the midst of the thorn-tree. A voice from the bush commanded him to show the common mark of Oriental respect for a superior presence or holy spot, by taking off his sandals and standing barefoot. He then knew that the Lord's presence was manifested there; for it is His presence that maketh holy. He obeyed, and stood wondering what manner of communication awaited him. The speaker thus announced himself: "I am the God of thy father, and of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob." God could not have described himself

TREADING OUT GRAIN WITH OXEN.

by a sweeter name than this. We love anything that was our ancestors'. The most trifling thing that once belonged to them has our reverence. What a hold should their God have upon us! And what a happiness it is to be born of good parents! God claims an interest in us, and we may claim an interest in Him, for their sake. Many a man smarts for his father's sin, but on the other hand the goodness of pious ancestors descends in blessings to remote generations.

And mark, God does not say, I *was* the God of Abraham, but I *am*. The patriarchs still live after so many hundred years of dissolution. No length of time can separate the souls of the just from their Maker.

The communication to Moses goes on. God declared that He had beheld with Divine compassion the miseries

of His people, and that the time for their deliverance was come. All this was well. It doubtless made the heart of Moses glad. But the closing words filled him with consternation, for they declared that *he* was to go back to Egypt, to present himself before the king, and to demand for Israel leave to depart. This filled him with unfeigned astonishment. "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" The answer was sufficient, "I will be with thee." Still Moses was not satisfied. The difficulties of the enterprise, his own supposed unfitness for it, his reluctance to plunge into the conflicts he foresaw, all crowded upon his thoughts, and made his heart sad. One objection after another that he produced was removed; yet when he had nothing further to urge in the way of specific objection, he rolled the whole mass of reluctant feeling into one strong groan for release from so fearful a task: "O my Lord, send I pray Thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." But he was the man appointed for that task. For this he had been born; for this preserved; for this trained; and there was no escape for him. God knew his fitness better than Moses knew himself, and the command became imperative upon him. Many causes may be assigned for his reluctance. He had reconciled his mind to his condition, with which he was contented. He knew too well the court of Egypt to have any desire to return to it, especially with a hostile purpose. He had no wish to become the chief of a multitude of miserable slaves, not fit for war, and not trained to submission under a mild and equitable government. He saw no means of supporting such a multitude in a march across the desert to Palestine, even if they should escape the hostility of the Egyptians; and no probability that at the head of such invaders he could conquer Palestine. But above all, Moses had no adequate faith in his Employer, the speaker from the burning bush. That Employer might possess all power; but could Moses rely upon being able, at all times of his need, to

command the exercise of that power? It is clear that this distrust was at the bottom of the extreme reluctance shown by Moses to accept of the commission to rescue the Israelites; for afterward when he found himself supported and backed by that Being under whom he acted, his proceedings were prompt, and his courage and zeal never failed.

But while want of faith was thus at the bottom of his unwillingness to accept the important office to which he was called, we must admit that humility also was an important element in the motives which held him back. Whatever proud swelling thoughts had once filled his mind have long since subsided, and he has dwindled down in his own esteem into the son of a Hebrew thrall and the keeper of Jethro's cattle. It might have been said to him: Are not you the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and the topmost man among your people? The fosterling of royalty, the favorite of fortune, the courtier and the scholar, the statesman and the sage—having every qualification for the work before you, by blood an Israelite, by education an Egyptian, learned, wise, valiant, experienced? But to all this Moses would answer: For the matter in hand I have not a single aptitude, but for everything required—superior sanctity, personal prowess, the gift of persuasive oratory—there is in me a special deficiency. And thus the man who earlier in his career felt himself the very person to deliver Israel, and was ready enough to take upon him and to lay about him, now declares his utter incompetency for the task imposed, and with unfeigned modesty shrinks from entering upon it.

But God overruled all the objections of Moses, and Aaron having been joined with him in the commission to Pharaoh, he returned to Egypt. The state of that country had so far changed since his flight from it, that he incurred no personal danger in making his appearance. All were dead who sought his life, or to whom he had been an object of dislike or envy; and if they had lived, there was nothing in his existing posi-

tion to awaken their ancient and forgotten resentments. It must not be supposed that when he reappeared in Egypt, it was forgotten who and what he had been, or that he made any concealment of it. His very name, so peculiar and distinctive, and his connection with his brother Aaron, must have suggested the fact. It is more probable that it was the knowledge of his former connection with the court, which procured him the more ready access to the king, and enabled him to speak to him with freedom, and to win from him more attention than any other Israelite could have secured. The knowledge of his thorough Egyptian education may also have disposed them to listen to him with more respect than might have been shown to any who could not boast a privilege which they so highly appreciated. He was in their view an educated man, while all the other Israelites were probably little more in their sight than an uneducated rabble. In all countries *education* consists in the knowledge of certain things, which he who knows not is held to be uneducated, whatever else he may know.

There were, therefore, no difficulties in the way of Moses but such as resulted from the nature of his mission; and he appeared under advantages which no other of his people could claim. Nevertheless, the result of his application to the Egyptian court was at first far from favorable. He preferred his request in this simple form: "Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness." The king's answer was short and terribly decisive: "Who is Jehovah that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go." We are not to infer from this that Pharaoh was an atheist. That was not the religion of Egypt, which had only too many gods. But he regarded Jehovah merely as the special and particular god of the Hebrews, and he saw nothing in their condition to convince him that their god possessed such power as to make it necessary for him to

obey. It therefore behooved the Lord, through His commissioned servant, to set forth His power in the eyes of the Egyptians, and convince them that the demand came from One whose high behests were not to be despised. This is the meaning of the great transactions which followed. There was a contest for power between the idols of Egypt and the God of Israel. The king did not deny the existence of Jehovah, or that he had authorized such a demand as Moses made in His name; but regarding Him only as the national god of the Hebrews, he considered that Egypt had stronger gods of its own, who would not fail to protect it from whatever anger the god of the Israelites might evince at the neglect of a mandate opposed to the interests of a nation under their guardianship.

From the nature of the case the conflict could only be one of miracles. And Moses appears as the first in that series of prophets who were at once *seers* and *workers of signs*. He was the first, as the apostles were the last, who wrought miracles in attestation of their Divine commission. And as the first example of a Divine message accredited by miracles, as the commencement of that system where heaven-imparted truth calls in as its sanction heaven-imparted power, the narrative at this point is peculiarly instructive. The first miracle performed was the turning of Aaron's staff into a serpent. This was a sign well suited to the understanding of an Egyptian king, considering the extent to which serpents figured among the symbols and objects of his faith. He sent for his wise men and sorcerers; and now the contest between the Jewish leaders and the court of Egypt fairly began. The "wise men" threw down their staves in like manner, and they also became serpents. How was this accomplished? Some think that by the power of Satan these acts were really performed as represented; while others hold that they were acts of legerdemain, or produced by great skill in the natural sciences. The latter view seems to us correct. The

taming of serpents so as to conceal them about the person, and substitute them by a sudden movement for something held in the hand, is well known to be in the East, at the present day, one of the common arts of jugglery. The mere appearance of the transformation of a rod into a serpent by an adroit and sudden concealment of the one and production of the other, is certainly an illusion fully within the power of modern serpent charmers. There is in fact a serpent in Egypt, which by a particular pressure upon the neck, becomes so intensely inflated as to be quite rigid and motionless, not unlike a staff. In this state it may be held out horizontally,

ARARAT.

without bend or flexure. But on being again touched in a particular manner, it recovers from its trance. May not this serpent have been employed by the Egyptians? In this case the very difference between the real and pretended miracle is, that while the real serpents of the wise men assumed the appearance of rods, the real rod of Moses became a real serpent; and when both were opposed in a state of animated existence, the rod devoured the real living animals,

thus conquering the great typical representation of the protecting divinity of Egypt. Here was something far above delusive art, and we do not read that the magicians attempted to imitate it. Serpents do not naturally devour each other, neither could one serpent devour many. Nor could there have been delusion here; for the feeding of serpents is always a slow operation, and in this instance it was watched by keen and suspicious eyes.

But this transaction seems to have made no impression upon the king, favorable to the claim of the Israelites; and the next acts were acts of judgment, since that which was merely demonstrative had been disregarded. Considering the estimation in which the river Nile was held by the Egyptians, who regarded it as a god, it is not without meaning that the first judgment smote that god, and rendered its most pleasant and salubrious waters noisome and pestiferous. Aaron, acting as usual for his brother, lifted up his rod and smote the waters that were in the river, and they became blood. We do not propose to consider this plague, and those which followed it, in detail, but pass them with one or two general remarks.

First, there is a certain congruity between these supernatural visitations and the land on which they were inflicted. Although the rapidity with which they succeeded one another, although the circumstance of their coming on and departing whenever Moses gave the word, and no sooner, although the exemption of Goshen when the rest of Egypt was overwhelmed—all show the Hand Omnipotent from which they came, yet the visitations themselves were more or less characteristic of the country. The vials were inverted by an unseen Power, but the channels in which the vengeance flowed were the courses already cut by phenomena more or less familiar to the people. For instance, the Nile which this time, in the beginning of the year, flowed with blood, is apt every June to assume a reddish color. Frogs, with gnats,

flies and other insect plagues, are to this day no small source of misery in Egypt. Boils are of common occurrence among the people, and murrain among the cattle, and at certain seasons of the year desolating hail-storms sweep over the land.

As to the plague of locusts, let us quote from the traveler Lepsius: "I had descended into a mummy-pit, to open some newly-discovered sarcophagi, and was not a little astonished to find myself in a regular snow-drift of locusts, which almost darkening the heavens, flew over our heads from the desert in hundreds of thousands to the valley. I took it for a single flight, and called my companions from the tombs, that they might see this Egyptian wonder ere it was over. But the flight continued. The whole region, far and near, was covered with locusts. I sent an attendant into the desert to discover the breadth of the swarm. He ran for the space of a quarter of an hour, then returned and told us that as far as he could see, there was no end to them. I rode home in the midst of the locust-shower. At the edge of the fruitful plain they fell down in showers, and so it went on the whole day till the evening, and so the next day from morning to evening, and the third; in short, to the sixth day, and in weaker flight much longer. The Arabs are now lighting great fires of smoke in the fields, and clattering and making loud noises all day long, to preserve their crops from the unexpected invasion. It will, however, do little good. Like a new animated vegetation, these millions of winged spoilers cover even the neighboring sandhills, so that scarcely anything is to be seen of the ground; and when they rise from one place, they immediately fall down somewhere in the neighborhood; they are tired with their long journey, and seem to have lost all fear of their natural enemies, men, animals, smoke and noise, in their furious wish to fill their stomachs, and in the feeling of their immense number. The most wonderful thing, in my estimation, is their flight over the naked wilderness, and the

instinct which has guided them from some oasis, over the inhospitable desert, to the fat soil of the Nile vale."

To this land of locusts and hail-storms, of epidemic boils and disastrous murrain, the warnings of Moses were abundantly intelligible. They were not threatened with an unknown visitation, but were in a like predicament to our own land if in one short year we were forewarned of nine such plagues as a frost in June, the Hessian fly, the rinderpest and the cholera. When they were foretold, we could have no difficulty in understanding what was threatened, and when they came on the predicted day, and went away (such as could go away) at the time appointed, we should have no difficulty in identifying them as God's own messengers.

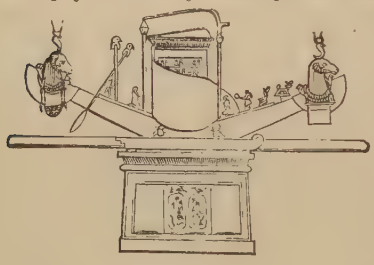
While, however, the plagues were of a kind to demonstrate conclusively the superiority of Jehovah and His commissioned messengers over the idols and their ministers, they were so conducted as to leave Pharaoh a free agent. He was not put on the actual rack or held over a slow fire till his cruel hand relaxed and let the Hebrew bondmen go. Each plague was followed by a lull, a respite, and in that reprieve "the heart of Pharaoh was hardened." Except on the last occasion, when the Israelites stood marshaled and ready to move off amidst the amazement and anguish consequent on the death of the first-born—except on that last occasion the Israelites were never ready to take Pharaoh at his word; but if he made some small concession over night, he was able to recall it in the morning. And who will deny that he was strongly tempted? It was no small sacrifice to let his vassals go, to create a gap so instantaneous and so wide in the industry of his kingdom, to part with the bone and sinew of his realm. They were very profitable to him. He had their labor for nothing. To let them go would be to confess his own weakness. They gratified his lust of power, his ambition, his pride, his love of oppression and injustice. He wished to have his own way in the matter. His was a proud and imperious will,

unused to bend and yield. It was a controversy between God and him for the mastery. To let them go would be not only a serious loss, but a great humiliation. To have that son of a slave glorying over him; to receive the dictation of that runagate; to let Apis and Osiris bow before the Hebrews' god; oh! how could he submit to this, and what would Nimrod and his Ethiopian neighbors say? And so, as often as he was reproved, Pharaoh still hardened his neck, until suddenly he was cut off, and that without remedy.

Nine plagues had passed away, and with the ending of the last, with the abating of the deluge of darkness, Moses upon pain of death was ordered from the presence-chamber of the king. For three days the murky inundation had suspended all social intercourse and all ordinary occupation. But at last the cloud had lifted. On the fourth morning the sun shone out so clear, and by the river margin the water-lilies looked up into the sky which reflected its unclouded mirror under them. No trace remained of the long and pitchy night. The river was not ink, the blossoms were not black, and as the tramp of footguards echoed in the open court, as barges went flashing up the stream, and the gay life of Memphis fluttered forth like the phantoms of a dream, the fears and vows of the monarch fled away, and to the messenger of God the rude rebuff was given, "Let me see thy face no more."

And now Moses is directed to prepare for the last awful infliction, the crowning-stroke, which shall compel the king to let the oppressed go free. In one night, in one hour, at one fell stroke, all the first-born of Egypt are to be cut off, "from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill." The mind needs to pause to contemplate the length, the breadth, the depth, the fullness of this terrible doom.

This is one of the great matters that cannot be taken in at one impression. The mind must dwell on it, must rest on the details, must penetrate to the homes and hearts of the Egyptian people, must follow the course of this infliction from the throned Pharaoh to the poor bondwoman drudging behind the mill. Conceive such a calamity falling upon our own land, upon one of our great cities. Human hearts in Memphis were not different from hearts in Boston or New York. The "great cry" which arose at midnight, when every house was roused to the dying agonies of its first-born, is the same that would be heard to-day in London, were the fell swoop of the destroyer to descend upon it. The pride, the hope, the joy of every family was taken. It was a woe without remedy or alleviation. He that is sick may be restored. A body emaciated or ulcerated, maimed or enfeebled, may again recover soundness and strength. But what kindly process can reanimate the breathless clay, and give back to the arms of mourning affection an only son, a first-born, smitten with death? Hope, the last refuge and remedy under evil, was here cut up by the roots. The blow was struck at midnight, when none could see the hand that inflicted it, and most were reposing in quiet sleep. Had this sleep been silently and insensibly exchanged for the sleep of death, the circumstances would not have been so overwhelmingly awful. But there was not even this mitigation of the horror. For three days and nights the country had been enveloped in thick darkness, and none had risen up from their places. Now, after one intervening day of brightness, they were roused from their beds, to render what fruitless aid they could to their expiring children, and to mourn over their slain. All



EGYPTIAN ARK.

the first-born, from the man in the vigor of manhood, to the infant that had just been born, died in that one hour of night The stay, the comfort, the delight of every family was annihilated by a single stroke.

This plague was so terrible that even at this distance it is awful to survey. We may well be shocked by the naked announcement that in a single night a whole nation was plunged into mourning, every family bewailing its eldest son. But we must remember the facts. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay." There is here a direct but mysterious retribution, delayed but sure. The time was when by order of this government all the new-born infants of Israel were slain by the hand of man, rent pitilessly from the mother's breast, and cast ruthlessly into the waters. And this was not the first-born only but all—all that drew the breath of life. Toward the Israelites the Egyptians had long behaved so cruelly that if suffering could be weighed or measured, we might safely aver that Israel's slow centuries of endurance were feebly countervailed by Egypt's night of anguish. Who can tell the protracted misery of a high-spirited free-roaming people who had been entrapped into sudden slavery? And what bottle but God's own could contain the tears of the broken-hearted bondmen, the tears of families torn asunder, the tears of hapless mothers entreating the stony-hearted ruffians not to hurl into the stream the babe snatched from their bosoms, the tears of trampled abjects who saw their dearest kindred faint beneath their burdens or knocked down by savage overseers, and who dared not remonstrate or complain? But all history teaches that God does hear the cry of the oppressed, and the case before us is only one of a thousand instances which prove that no public wrong, and especially no wrong against the truth of natural feeling, no *savage* wrong, ever fails of retribution. The nation which shows no mercy shall have no mercy shown to it. In the common course of Providence it

is in the nature and course of national sins to draw down national judgments. And to the savage breast, in the ordination of God, arguments are addressed that are suitable and convincing. The tiger has grasped your child! 'Tis no use to coax or flatter, 'tis only the flaming fagot you thrust into his face, which makes him howl and drop his victim in the shock of sudden pain. "Israel is my first-born," said God, "let Israel my people go." But the lion only snarled, and even blow after blow only made him bite the firmer and make the bondage sorer; till an arm of fire gleamed through the night, and a "great cry" confessed the burning blow, as the victim dropped from his gory jaws, bruised and palpitating, but still alive and FREE.

It was destined to prove "a night much to be remembered," the birth-night of Hebrew nationality; and means were taken to engraft upon it a lesson of primary importance, and a celebration which should never be forgotten. For the time every head of a household was exalted into a priest, and was directed to take a lamb and keep it up from the tenth day of the month till the fourteenth. On the fourteenth, in the evening, the lamb was to be slain, and its blood was to be sprinkled on the side-posts and lintel of the dwelling: "For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood I will *pass over* you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."

And now the time had fully come for the sword to fall. It was April, and it was the night of the full moon. The soft and silvery light fell on the white backs of the African mountains far away, and it streamed almost perpendicularly on the mighty Pyramids which rose like silent symbols of eternity straight into the sky. In the royal streets of Memphis all was silent, and all was silent in the wide green plain

around it—so silent that if you had taken a quiet stroll by the river brink you might have heard the plunge of the night-feeding fishes, and the pants of behemoth as he slept among the bulrushes. But although all was so silent, all was not locked in slumber. These lowly cottages, they are Hebrew huts, the hovels of slaves, and they have lights still burning. Peep through the chink and see what the inmates are doing. They are all of them astir; I declare not one of them has laid down, and they look like people preparing for a journey. On the table are traces of a finished repast, the house mother is packing up her kneading trough; with his staff in his hand the goodman is ready for the road, and the very children are excited and watching. But what's this red mark on the door? What means this blood on the lintel? Did you hear that cry? 'Tis the moment of midnight, and some tragedy is enacted in that Egyptian dwelling, for such an unearthly shriek! and it is repeated and re-echoed, as doors burst open and frantic women rush into the street; and as the houses of priests and physicians are beset, they only shake their heads in speechless agony, and point to the death-sealed features of their own first-born. Lights are flashing at the palace gates, and flitting through the royal chambers; and as the king's messengers hasten through the town inquiring where the two venerable Hebrew brothers dwell, the whisper flies, "The prince-royal is dead!" Be off, ye sons of Jacob! Speed from the house of bondage, ye oppressed and injured Israelites! And in their eagerness to "thrust forth" the terrible, because heaven-protected race, they press upon them gold and jewels, and bribe them to be gone.

It was, indeed, a night to be remembered, for a nation was born in that night. During the four hundred years in Egypt, Jacob's family had expanded into a multitude, the three-score and fifteen souls had grown to at least two millions. But it was a mere inorganic multitude, a horde without a head, with no laws or rulers of its own, a helpless, down-trampled tribe,

held together by common hardships, and a common mother-tongue. This night, however, they sprang to their feet an exceeding great army. In the surprise of their sudden emancipation their mouth was filled with laughter, and their tongue with melody. Jehovah had made bare His mighty arm, and Pharaoh, crushed and humbled, was entreating them to fly. With no king over them but God, with no bonds save those of mutual brotherhood, they were now their own masters, and moving toward the Promised Land. No wonder if the fifteenth of Abib, the night of this glorious revolution, the return of their national independence, the recurrence of the exodus, became a joyful anniversary; no wonder if, without Divine direction, they had agreed to keep it as a joyful feast forever.

But of such an event the memorial was not left to mere chance or good feeling, and we have here the rules laid down

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN FUNERAL PROCESSION.

which secured its continued celebration. And we know that in point of fact the celebration lasted as long as the Hebrew nation had a home, and in some of its features it is still kept up by that peculiar people. Everything was done to make it a joyful and suggestive jubilee, and if you had lived in the days of the Lord Jesus you would have seen it kept somewhat after this fashion: First of all the little capital would fill up with people from all ends of Palestine—would fill up and brim over like a great bee-hive, every house as full as it could hold, and thousands lodging anywhere, all bright and cheerful, hospitable and open-handed, for the maxim was, "This day is holy unto the Lord your God, go your way, eat

the fat and drink the sweet; neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength." Four days beforehand, the father of the family brought home a lamb, gentle and beautiful, sure to take the hearts of the children; but in this instance a short-lived favorite, for in four days the lamb must die. Then came the day of preparation, with its hunt through all the house in search of that leavened bread which they were commanded to put away, when every drawer and cupboard was opened, and every corner carefully explored and if the smallest morsel was found it was brushed into a basin and carried out to a bonfire kindled on purpose, and, burnt with a prayer for its annihilation. Then came the high day, the killing of the passover, followed by the paschal feast, a feast with specialties sure to strike the younger spectators. Instead of putting off their shoes at the door of the apartment, as usual, the guests walked in in their sandals, loins girded and staff in hand, and not unfrequently instead of reclining they stood around the table, like pilgrims or passers-by, who could hardly wait to snatch a hasty morsel. Then on the table, beside the all-important lamb, roasted, and with bitter herbs sprinkled over it, stood one great goblet of wine; and for bread, instead of the ordinary loaves, were thin airy cakes of the finest, whitest flour, and a solid cake of figs and almonds, shaped like a brick, and with cinnamon strewed over it in imitation of straw. Whilst the feast was going on, at a signal from his mother, the youngest child in the party asked, "What mean ye by this service?" and then the grandfather or oldest guest made answer: "Long ago our fathers lived in Egypt, and the Egyptians made them slaves. The Egyptians used them very cruelly and our fathers cried to God. God said to the king of Egypt, 'Let my people Israel go;' but the heart of the king was very hard, and for all the plagues which God sent on Egypt the king would not let Israel go. At last God said to our fathers, 'Take every family of you a lamb, and kill it to-night, and sprinkle its

blood upon your door, and stand ready to start, for this night Egypt will be glad when you go.' And that night into all except the blood-sprinkled houses went the angel of death, and smote the first-born, whilst he *passed over* our fathers, and carried them out of that house of bondage to this goodly land. So we, the sons of Israel, come together to keep the great feast of the Hebrew family. We eat the unleavened bread and the lamb with bitter herbs, as our fathers ate that night. This day is holy unto the Lord, and as we keep our joyful feast we sing the Great Hallel."

We have said that at the exodus the children of Israel numbered at least two millions. The computation is made in this way. There were 600,000 men fit to bear arms. Now it is known that the number of males too young and too old for military service is *at least* equal to that of efficient men. This raises the number to 1,200,000 males of all ages: and then this number is to be doubled to include the females, making the whole amount to 2,400,000, or we may safely say two millions and a half, especially if we take account of "the mixed multitude," who we are told went out with the Israelites. These we take to have been native Egyptian vagrants, and convicts, and foreign captives, whom community of suffering had brought into contact with the Israelites, and who with or without their consent quitted the country along with them. These were like the camp-followers of an army; which in the case of an Eastern army are often as numerous as the soldiers themselves. Their number is not calculable like that of the Hebrews, but it is safe to estimate that they raised the whole number to near three millions. The collecting together of so immense a multitude, the arranging of the order of their march, the provisioning of them even for a few days, much more for forty years, must have been utterly impossible, unless a special and overruling Providence had interfered to obviate the difficulties of the case Conceive an emigration embracing all the inhabitants of one

of the most populous States of our Union, New York or Pennsylvania, and you will be able to form some idea of the exodus of the Hebrew nation from Egypt—in itself a wonder hardly second to any wrought by Divine power in effecting the deliverance of the Israelites from Pharaoh.

In the campaigns of Alexander the Great, we are told that over his tent he caused a lofty pole to be set up, and on its summit was a brazier filled with combustible materials kept constantly burning. In this way, if any one wanted to find the commander's head-quarters he could never be at any loss, for over them floated the cloudy banner by day, the flaming beacon by night. Such to the Israelites, during their desert journey, was their aerial pillar. When, on the night of their departure, they reached the appointed rendezvous at Succoth, unorganized and unaccustomed to martial move ments, they might soon have found themselves a helpless mass, a weltering crowd huddled together as sheep without a shepherd, had they not espied betimes a banner in the sky, the standard of their unseen leader, and gathered reassurance from the saving sign. There was sure guidance in its goings, a pledge of safety in its presence; by day a welcome awning in its shadow, and by night an illumination no less welcome in its forth-flowing effulgence.

"When Israel, of the Lord beloved,
Out from the land of bondage came,
Their fathers' God before them moved,
An awful guide, in cloud and flame!

"By day, along the astonished lands,
The cloudy pillar glided slow;
By night, Arabia's crimsoned sands
Returned the fiery column's glow."[1]

A waving pennant by day and a torch by night, that pillar was Israel's pioneer. When the cloud journeyed, they jour neyed; and when the cloud rested, they rested. It was Israel's protector. When Pharaoh gave chase, the cloudy pillar

[1] Rebecca's hymn in Ivanhoe.

passed from the front of the camp to the rear, and became to the one a lamp, and to the other a "horror of thick darkness," so that the Egyptians could not get near the Israelites all the night. The Hebrew host was now hemmed in by the Red Sea. At the command of God, Moses lifted up his rod upon the waters, and forthwith a strong east wind began to blow, dividing the waters, and making a pathway through the deep. Encouraged by the light which they enjoyed, and by the marvelous interposition in their favor, the Israelites ventured into the channel thus opened, and began their march to the other side, the waters being a wall to them on the right hand and on the left.

MODERN FUNERAL PROCESSION.

It was not until the morning, when the rear of the Israelites had nearly reached the other side, that the Egyptians became aware of what had taken place. Advancing then, and finding the camp of Israel deserted, they hurried on by the road which they had evidently taken. It is not clear that they knew or thought they were following the Israelites into the bed of the sea. Considering the darkness, far denser than that of night alone, which had come between the pursuers and the pursued, it is not probable that they had any clear perception of the course in which they were moving, and least of all that they were traveling in the bared bed of the divided waters. They could hear the noise of the flying host before them, and could see confusedly a little way about

their feet, but in all likelihood they were little able to distinguish the localities around them, and may even have thought that they were pursuing the Israelites up the Valley of Bedea, and pressing them back to Egypt. But by the time day broke they became aware of their position. They were already far advanced on the miraculous road; and the east wind ceasing toward morning, the waters piled up by its agency began to return. But the bottom, along which they were marching, had become deep and miry by the previous march of the people and cattle of the Israelites; and finding a heavy sea returning on them from the west, the king's army thought it high time to retreat. But it was too late. They were embarrassed by the state of the ground, and before they could extricate themselves from their dangerous position, the waters returned and covered them all, consummating by one fearful stroke the deliverance of Israel and the overthrow of the Egyptians.

Every nation has some one prominent point of history which it regards with more habitual attention, and allusions to which occur more frequently than to any other in the songs of poets and the glowing words of orators; and to the Hebrews, the passage of the Red Sea, and the overthrow of Pharaoh and his splendid host, was this one point of fixed regard, referred to in all the subsequent literature of the people, and especially in the Psalms of David. And at the time of their deliverance Moses composed a thanksgiving ode, which the ten thousands of Israel united in singing, as they exulted in their new-born freedom on the shores of the Red Sea. In this noble piece of poetry, full of sublime thoughts, breathing deeply pious and grateful feeling, and replete with enlarged views of the consequences that might be expected to result from this glorious deliverance, we have an expression of the mind of the Hebrew public on this great occasion. As the ode was adapted for alternate recitation, not only did the men of Israel shout forth their joy in sacred strains, but the women also, led on

by Miriam, and accompanying their voices with the sound of the timbrel and the motions of the dance, swelled the chorus of thanksgiving, and re-echoed to the skies the bold *refrain*, "Sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He cast into the sea." Where, in all history, do we find a great national deliverance so appropriately acknowledged? Let this public action be tested by the highest standard in regard to elevated religious devotion, striking intellectual dignity, eloquent and cultivated diction, and tell us what great public act in the best ages of Greece and Rome will bear comparison with this grateful conduct of the redeemed Israelites?

The dividing of the sea has been commemorated in vivid verse by a favorite sacred poet, Bishop Heber:

> He comes, their leader comes! the man of God
> O'er the wide waters lifts his mighty rod,
> And onward treads; the circling waves retreat,
> In hoarse, deep murmurs from his holy feet;
> And the chased surges, inly roaring, show
> The hard, wet sand, and coral hills below.
> With limbs that falter, and with hearts that swell,
> Down, down they pass, a steep and slippery dell;
> Around them rise, in pristine chaos hurled,
> The ancient rocks, the secrets of the world;
> And flowers that blush beneath the ocean green,
> And caves, the sea-calves' low-roofed haunt, are seen.
> Down, safely down the narrow pass they tread;
> The beetling waters storm above their head:
> While far behind retires the sinking day,
> And fades on Edom's hills its latest ray."

A great word was that which Moses gave by command of God to Israel; "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." There they were, a sea before them far wider than their familiar Nile, and with the wild tumult of its waters very terrible; a sea before them, and on their rear, with his jingling chargers and his sounding chariots, an angry, ruthless king. Unarmed and unused to conflict,

PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA

to face round and fight was for a flock of sheep to charge a pack of wolves or lions, and across that gulf they had neither wings to fly nor boats to ferry; but although still invisible, it was across that gulf that the path of the ransomed stretched, and from God's "Forward," the veiling waters fled away, and revealed the road which no created eye had seen till then. Let us learn a lesson. Dark may be the night, bitter the storm, wide the sea before us, but if we hear the voice of God saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it," we may go forward fearing no evil. We can be placed in no circumstances where God will not be our guide and deliverer. The elements are His, and the stormier passions of men are under His control, too, and though our path lie through the waters, the winds shall do His bidding, and the sea become a wall for us on the right hand and on the left.

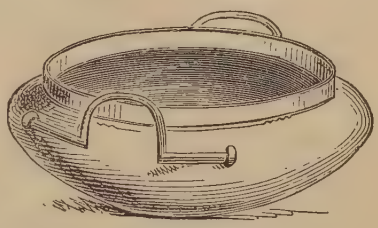
But no voice from heaven had bidden Pharaoh and his host go forward, and the same gulf which opened a triumphal path to Israel closed over the Egyptians and whelmed them in a watery grave, fulfilling the word of the Lord by Moses, "The Eyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them no more forever." And in the progress of our narrative *we* shall see Pharaoh no more—a character which after the manner of Cain and Herod, stands up from the sacred page awful and ominous, a seared and blasted peak without any redeeming verdure, and visited by no shower of blessing. A hard man, God left him to himself, so that he grew harder still. Proud, imperious, selfish, like the second James of England, at once a bigot and a despot, he got gradually committed to the unequal strife, and by a succession of steps as false as they were natural, was hurried forward to the fatal issue.

And now the Israelites, under the Divine direction, take their course toward Horeb. Marching three days without finding any water, they began to suffer fearfully from thirst. Let us not think lightly of their distress. Thirst is a cruel

thing. It is known to be such even in a humid clime, where the sensation is rarely and lightly experienced, and is very easily removed. But amid the hot sandy waste, under a burning sky, without any means of relief, the suffering is horrible. There is nothing like it. The sensation we call thirst is no more like the mad and raging fever of the desert, than our cool and verdant valleys are like the baked and blistering rocks of that burning wilderness. If we reflect, we see that this vast host of men, women and children, with numerous herds of cattle, had to travel over the sandy waste mostly on foot, with the burning sun over their heads, and we may form some faint idea of their condition. And if we look the individuals in the face, the unmistakable signs of suffering and misery enable us more distinctly to apprehend their wretched condition. They plod moodily and heavily on, no man speaking to his fellow. Many cannot speak if they would. Their tongues are parched and rough, and cling to the roofs of their mouths; their lips are black and shriveled, and their eyeballs are red with heat; and sometimes comes over them a dimness which makes them stagger with faintness. There is not one in all that multitude who probably would not have given all he possessed in the world, who would not have parted with a limb, or given up his life, for one cool draught of water. And this was suffered by a people who had been used to drink without stint of the finest water in the world.

But lo, their misery they think is past. In the distance they behold trees and bushes clad in refreshing green, and they know there must be water near. With glad looks and quickened steps they push joyously on. What a rush to the water, what eagerness to gulp the refreshing flood! Whence that universal groan, and horror, and despair? The water is *bitter*, so bitter as to be loathsome even to their intense agony of thirst. Pity them; but judge them not too severely, if in that awful moment of disappointment, with the waters of

Marah before their faces, and the waters of the Nile before their thoughts, they *murmured* and complained that they had been brought from unfailing waters to perish in that thirsty desolation. True, they should have trusted in God. They had been rescued from more imminent danger; and it was no arm of flesh, but the sacred pillar of cloud, which had indicated their way and brought them to that place. The Red Sea minstrels should not so soon have become mutineers and murmurers. But in consideration of their sufferings God readily excused them. It will be seen in the sacred record, that He dealt tenderly with them. He did not, as on other occasions when they sinned in like manner without like excuse, reprove them; but when Moses cried to Him for help, He, in the tenderness of His great pity, healed the waters, and made them sweet and salutary.



BRONZE EGYPTIAN CALDRON.

Tried with thirst, the chosen people were next tried with hunger. A military man, who has witnessed the difficulty of providing a regular supply of victuals, even in a peopled country, for a large body of men, whether by purchase or enforced contribution, can appreciate the faith required of Moses when he undertook to lead into "the waste howling wilderness," where no provisions existed or could be obtained by force or purchase, a people whose numbers exceeded by three-fold the largest army which the ambition or pride of man ever brought together. But his faith was vindicated by the result. A month after leaving Egypt, the provisions which the Israelites had brought with them were exhausted. And now the cry went up: "Ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill us with hunger." They desired bread and meat, and a miraculous supply of both was promised to them; not without a mild reproof for their murmurings and

distrust, which Moses told them, though ostensibly leveled at himself and brother, were really directed against the Lord.

The promised flesh came in the shape of a vast flock of quails, which being wearied probably with a long flight, flew so low that they were easily taken in immense numbers by the hand. It was necessary to preserve them for future use. The Israelites knew how that was to be accomplished. The Egyptians lived much upon wild fowl, which they preserved by drying them in the sun, and perhaps slightly salting them; and in the Egyptian monuments there are representations of birds, slit like fish, and laid out to dry. At the present day, in Lower Egypt, great numbers of birds are caught and rudely but efficiently preserved. The manner of doing it now is to strip off the feathers with the skin, and then bury them in the hot sand, till the moisture is absorbed, and the flesh thus preserved from corruption. One of these modes was followed by the Israelites. On a later occasion, it is said: "They spread them all abroad for themselves around the camp." Numbers xi. 32.

The next morning after the flight of quails, the face of the ground around the camp was seen to be covered with "a small round thing as small as the hoar-frost." To this the name of manna was given. The Most High in feeding His famished children with supplies straight from His own storehouse, selected a substance congruous to the place, and in keeping with their circumstances. As quails were abundant in the wilderness, and the miracle was only in their coming at the appointed time, and passing directly over the Hebrew camp, and flying so low as to be easily taken; so the miracle of the manna consisted in taking a palatable product of the place, and multiplying it a million-fold, that the supply might be adequate to the number and wants of the pensioners at heaven's gate. In the peninsula of Sinai there is still found in the midsummer months a substance called manna. It is a sweet gummy exudation from the tarfah or

tamarisk, and other plants, produced by the puncture of an insect; and it is either scraped from the leaves, or gathered up where its drops have trickled down to the ground. Now, God did not cause such rice crops to spring up in the bare and burning desert, as His people had been accustomed to see in the deep inundated soil of Egypt; nor did He perplex them by raining all around them the ready-made loaves, the bread-fruits of the then unknown isles of the Pacific; but selecting a nutritious and indigenous product, he fed them with what was indeed bread from heaven, though made after the similitude of a sample that was before them. Just as the Lord Jesus, when about to feed five thousand hungry guests, did not fling away the five loaves which were actually forthcoming, but used them as the starting-point or key-note of His miracle—so Jehovah, when about to feed His million guests for forty years, did not ignore the handful of meal already in the barrel, the few drops which already trickled from the tarfah trees, but multiplying the supply a hundred thousand-fold, instead of a mere taste of honey-dew, instead of a few tiny and tantalizing particles, with Divine profusion He emptied a whole garner over them every night, and scattered it round their tents thick as snow on Salmon.

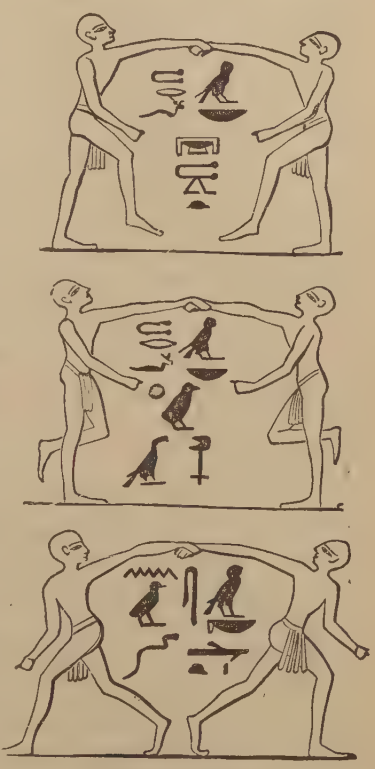
One day's journey short of Sinai, the Israelites came to Rephidim. Here they again wanted water. Their murmurings were more violent, and their conduct more outrageous than at Marah. They had lately seen their wants relieved in a similar emergency, and at this very time they were receiving, day by day, their bread from heaven. Yet so unreasonable was their spirit that they reproached Moses for having brought them out of Egypt to kill them and their children with thirst; and their violence of manner was such as led Moses to cry unto the Lord, saying: "What shall I do unto this people? They be almost ready to stone me." Thus soon did they justify the reluctance with which he had abandoned the quiet life he loved so well, to assume the lead-

ership of this discontented and turbulent people. The Lord directed Moses what to do. The people were to remain in the camp. He, with the elders as witnesses, was to proceed to Horeb. There he was to smite a rock, from which a copious stream of waters should flow out, to furnish the people with drink. Tradition points out the rock which Moses smote. It is an isolated mass of granite, nearly twenty feet square and high, with its base concealed in the earth. In the face of the rock are a number of horizontal fissures, at unequal distances from each other; some near the top, and others at a little distance from the surface of the ground. Dr. Olin, an American clergyman, says: "The color and whole appearance of the rock are such that (leaving out of view the traditions) no one can hesitate to believe that they have been produced by water flowing from these fissures. I think it would be extremely difficult to form these fissures or produce these appearances by art. It is not less difficult to believe that a natural fountain should flow at the height of a dozen feet out of the face of an isolated rock."

And so Rev. Dr. Durbin, after stating that he was skeptical as to the truth of the tradition before visiting the spot, writes: "Had any enlightened geologist, utterly ignorant of the miracle of Moses, passed up this ravine, and seen the rock as it now is, he would have declared that strong and long-continued fountains of water had once poured their gurgling currents from it and over it. Neither art nor chance could by any means be concerned in the contrivance of these holes, which formed so many fountains. The more I gazed upon the irregular mouth-like chasms in the rock, the more I found my skepticism shaken; and at last I could not help asking myself: Is not this indeed the very rock which Moses struck, and from which the waters gushed forth and poured their streams down the valleys to Rephidim, where Israel was encamped and perishing with thirst?" We may add that this place bears such a relation to the Sinaitic valleys, that the

water flowing from the rock could be made to supply the Israelites during a considerable portion of their journeyings in the desert, agreeing with the words of Paul when he says "they drank of the rock which followed them," that is followed them in the sense of being the source of the stream which followed them.

One more stage and Sinai was reached. It is well to remark here that Horeb and Sinai are used convertibly or interchangeably in the Pentateuch, to denote the mountain on which the Law was given. Perhaps one is the general name for the whole cluster or central group of the Sinai Mountains, and the other designates the particular summit where the Law was delivered. Moses doubtless, during the forty years in which he kept the flocks of Jethro, had often wandered over these mountains, and was well acquainted with their valleys and deep recesses. Here in the midst of the great circular granite region, embosomed among dark cliffs, a fine plain spreads out with the mountain impending over it—a secret holy place with only a single feasible entrance, shut out from the world amid lone and desolate mountains.



EGYPTIAN DANCES.

Let us read the first impressions of some of those who have

penetrated this labyrinth of dry valleys and desolate mountains, and reached the very spot where the TEN WORDS were spoken, which afterward graven on stone by God's own finger, are still recognized by Christian, Jew and Moslem as the basis of all morals and of all religion. And first, the American traveler, Dr. Robinson, writes: "As we advanced, the valley still opened wider and wider, with a gentle ascent, and became full of shrubs and tufts of herbs, shut in on each side by lofty granite ridges, with rugged, shattered peaks a thousand feet high, while the face of Horeb rose dark and frowning before us. Both my companion and myself involuntarily exclaimed: 'Here is room enough for a large encampment.' Reaching the top of the ascent or water-shed, a fine, broad plain lay before us, gently sloping toward the south-east, enclosed by rugged and venerable mountains of dark granite —stern, naked, splintered peaks and ridges of indescribable grandeur, and terminated at the distance of more than a mile by the bold and awful front of Horeb, rising perpendicularly in frowning majesty from twelve to fifteen hundred feet in height. It was a scene of solemn grandeur, such as we had never seen, and the associations which at the moment rushed upon our minds were almost overwhelming. Still advancing, the front of Horeb rose before us like a wall, smooth and precipitous, and one can approach quite to the foot and touch the mountain. On one of these cliffs the Lord descended in fire and proclaimed the Law. Here is the plain where the whole congregation were assembled; there is the mount that could be approached and touched if not forbidden; there the mountain brow where the lightnings and thick cloud were visible, and the thunders and the voice of the trump were heard, when the Lord came down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai."

Dr. Durbin thus describes the approach to Sinai: "Emerging from the pass, and ascending gradually, gloomy, precipitous mountain masses rose to view on either hand. The

caravan moved slowly, and apparently with a more solemn, measured tread; the Bedouins became more serious and silent, and looked steadily before them, as if to catch the first glimpse of some revered object. The space before us gradually expanded, when suddenly our guide, pointing to a black perpendicular cliff, whose two riven and rugged summits rose some fifteen hundred feet directly in front of us, exclaimed, *Jebel Musa*, Mount of Moses! How shall I describe the effect of that announcement? Not a word was spoken by Moslem or Christian; but slowly and silently we advanced into the still-expanding plain, our eyes immovably fixed on the frowning precipices of the stern and desolate mountain. We were on the plain where Israel encamped at the giving of the Law, and that grand and gloomy height before us was Sinai, on which God descended in fire, and the mountain was enveloped in smoke, and shook under the tread of the Almighty, while His presence was proclaimed by the long, loud peals of repeated thunder, above which the blast of the trumpet was heard waxing louder, and reverberating amid the stern and gloomy heights around, and then God spake with Moses, and all the people removed and stood afar off, and trembled when they saw the thunderings and lightnings and thick darkness where God was, and said unto Moses: Speak thou with us; but let not God speak with us, lest we die. We all seemed to ourselves to be present at this terrible scene, and would have marched directly up to the Mount of God, had not the guide recalled us to ourselves, by pointing to the convent far up in the deep ravine."

We may take another description from the author of *Forty Days in the Desert:* "Catching, as we mounted higher and higher, the still freshening breeze from the cool regions above, we felt equal to anything. The narrow valley widened gradually into a high, dreary undulating plain, hemmed in by still drearier mountains, which upreared their dark, shattered, thunder-stricken peaks higher and higher on each side

as we advanced; while right before us, closing up the plain, and shutting it in, towered sheer from its level, an awful range of precipices, which seemed to bar our further progress through this region of desolate sublimity. As we still advanced, a narrow glen opened up between them, running deeper into the heart of the solitude, and at some distance up this, half lost between walls and naked rock, peeped out the high wall of the convent, and the dark verdure of its garden, looking, as some one has well described it, like the end of the world."

No one who has not seen them, can conceive the ruggedness of these vast piles of granite rocks, rent into chasms, rounded into small summits, or splintered into countless peaks, all in the wildest confusion, as they appear to the eye of an observer from any of the heights. We may imagine what a strange and solemn region it would be to Israel—come away from the Nile, broad and overbrimming, to these ravines, down which nothing flowed but rivers of hot air; from the loud streets and stirring lanes of Goshen and Memphis to that listening silence which seemed to await the voice of the Eternal, and those lofty peaks which, relieved by no verdure, and interrupted by no life, carried the eye that rested on them straight up to heaven. If it be the perfection of a place of worship to have nothing to distract the mind, there could be nothing more stern and still than this inland solitude, with its granite pinnacles soaring up nine thousand feet into the firmament—an Alpine skeleton, a Tyrol or Savoy, with its forests and its snows torn off, and its lakes dried up—the ruins of a world.

So awful was the sanctuary, so sublime the pulpit to which Jehovah led His people, that they might hear His memorable sermon and receive the statute-book of heaven. Fifty days had passed since that night so memorable when the fiery pillar gave the sign and showed the path to the marching millions; and now conducted into the very depths

of the desert, and prepared by such miracles as the manna and the smitten rock, the people were ready to receive the first and, in its accompaniments, the most stupendous of all the revelations to be made through them to man. When the Ten Commandments were spoken, Moses was on the plain and on a level with the rest of the congregation. And although they were afterward consigned to stone tablets, so terrible was the voice of the Eternal, so like to dissolve their quaking frames as thrill after thrill it cut and hewed the fleshly tables of their hearts, that they said to Moses: "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Both as spoken by God's own voice, and as written on the rock by God's own finger, these commands stand forth alone, their supreme importance sufficiently betokened by their prominence in the forefront of all the rest, and by their promulgation so directly and entirely Divine.

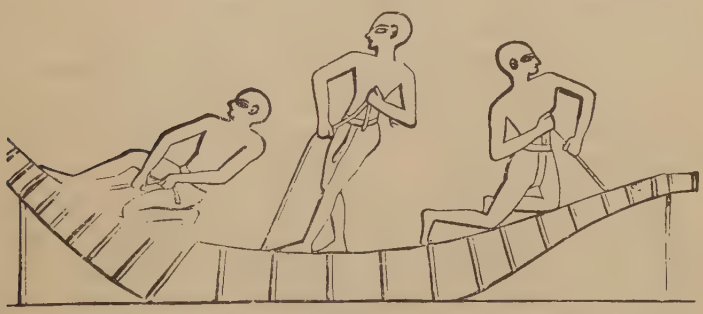
Then the Decalogue is marked by wonderful simplicity and brevity. The second, third and fourth commandments go into some detail, but like the rest each of them can easily be condensed into a single sentence; so that they well merit the old Talmudic name, The Ten Words—words so plain that he who runs may read, so portable that he who forgets everything besides, may easily remember them. And they are as comprehensive as they are brief and authoritative. The first table is religious, and the second is moral. The first table fixes the right object of worship, the one supreme, self-existent Jehovah—the right mode, direct and without the intervention of images—the right spirit, reverently and with godly fear. The second or ethical table is the protector of life, of person, of property, of character; and as the rest sufficiently cover the outward conduct, the series closes with one which reaches the thought and intents of the heart: Thou shalt not covet.

A wonderful code! and a wonderful occasion! And it

is impossible to calculate the impressions and impulses which date from that hour of awe and wonder. A sensation as of Sinai is in the heart of Israel still; and it has been a great thing for the world that through all these three thousand years there has existed in the midst of the nations, amidst pagan polytheism and papal idolatry, a race of monotheists and spiritual worshipers, a race witnessing for the unity and inconceivable majesty of the Most High. And during these long ages, philosophers and divines have been studying morals, the duties men owe to God and to each other, the laws that bind society and hold its parts together; but they who have added a thousand truths to science and a thousand inventions to art, have not discovered any duties which were overlooked in the code of morals which Moses received upon Sinai. By Divine authority he established in Israel a form of government and a code of laws which neither time nor experience has been able to improve. Like the goddess fabled to have sprung full-grown and full-armed, from the head of Jupiter, or like those who never hung on mother's breast, the man and woman whom Eden received to its blissful bowers, this system was mature and perfect from the beginning. What a man was he who, in that rude and early age, inculcated laws that have formed, through all succeeding ages, the highest standard of morality! Since his long-distant day, men have run to and fro, and knowledge has been increased; the boundaries of science have been vastly extended, but not those of morality; nor has one new duty been added to those of the two tables he brought down from Sinai. Adapted to all ages, circumstances and countries, time has neither altered nor added to the Ten Commandments. They remain the ten stones of the arch on which our domestic happiness, the purity of society, the security of life and property, and the prosperity of nations alike stand. At Sinai the rules of eternal righteousness, which had been lying about the world, tossing along from age to age, vague, amorphous and unauthoritative, were

handed forth from heaven anew; and clear beyond cavil, sufficiently compact for the smallest memory, and comprehensible by the feeblest understanding, they became to mankind a statute-book forever, a statute-book direct from the presence of Infinite Majesty, and in the solemnities by which it was sanctioned, suggestive of that awful tribunal when it will reappear as the law by which the righteous Judge shall render to every man according to his deeds.

The Decalogue is the first statute-book which abolished idolatry and polytheism. "No God but Me," says the first commandment; "No likeness or image," says the second; and in thus learning the unity and spirituality of the Divine



PAPYRUS BOAT.

nature, Israel was at once put in advance of the rest of the world by at least fifteen hundred years. In the most important of all knowledge, the little Samuel who could repeat these two commandments was wiser than Socrates or Cicero adoring a statue. He was wiser than Homer or Hesiod with his lords many and gods many; he was wiser than Confucius or Lucretius without a god at all.

Another peculiarity of this statute-book is its consecration of one day in seven to the service of Jehovah. For the wisdom of this we quote only the testimony of Humboldt. He says: "The selection of the seventh day is certainly the wisest that could have been made. To some extent it may

be optional to shorten or lengthen labor on other days, but in regard to men's physical power, and for perseverance in a monotonous employment, I am convinced that six days is just the true measure. There is likewise something humane in this, that the beasts which aid man in his labor share the rest. To lengthen the interval would be as inhuman as foolish. When, in the time of the Revolution, I spent several days in Paris, I saw this institution, despite its Divine origin, superseded by the dry and wooden decimal system. Only the tenth day was a day of rest, and all customary work was continued for nine long days. This being evidently too long, Sunday was kept by some as far as the police permitted, and the result was too much idleness."

Space fails for reference to other salient points of this Divine system. A modern jurist, a Frenchman and an infidel, observes, "Good right had Moses to challenge his Israelites, And what nation hath statutes like yours? a worship so exalted, laws so equitable, a code so complete? Compared with all the legislations of antiquity, none so thoroughly embodies the principles of everlasting and universal righteousness. Lycurgus wrote not for a people but for an army; it was a barrack which he erected, not a commonwealth; and sacrificing everything to the military spirit, he mutilated human nature in order to crush it into armor. Solon, on the contrary, could not resist the effeminate and relaxing influences of his Athens. It is in Moses alone that we find a regard for the right, austere and incorruptible; a morality distinct from policy, and rising above regard for times and peoples. The trumpet of Sinai still finds an echo in the conscience of mankind; the Decalogue still binds us all."

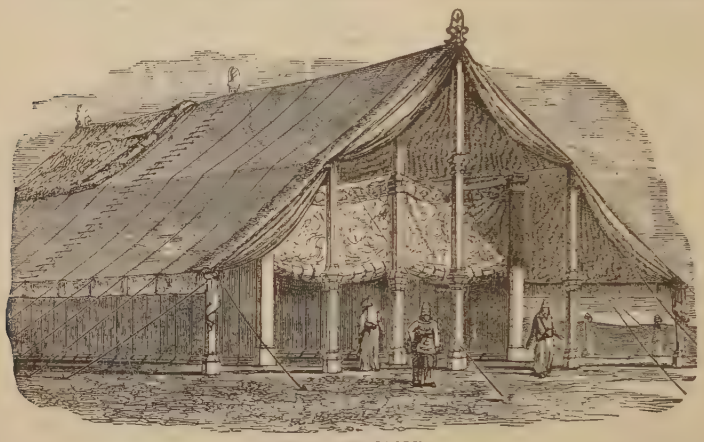
But as a legislator, besides *moral*, Moses established criminal and civil laws, which, unless in so far as they were specially adapted to the circumstances of the Israelites, our law-makers and magistrates would do well to copy. Inspired with the profoundest wisdom, they are patterns to all ages of equity

and justice. For instance, how much kinder to the poor, and less burdensome to the community, are what may be called the "poor laws" of Moses, than any corresponding legislation of our own land? How much more wise than ours the laws that dealt with theft—thus far, that requiring the thief to restore four-fold the value of what he had stolen, and work till he had done so, they assigned to that crime a punishment which at once secured reparation to the plundered, and the reformation of the plunderer. Nor less wise were those sanitary laws, of which though long neglected, late years and bitter experience have been teaching us the importance. It is only now, with all our boasted progress in arts and science, that we are awaking to the value of such regulations, as securing cleanliness in the habits and in the homes of the people, promote their health and preserve their lives. Anticipating the discoveries of the nineteenth century and the plans of our modern sanitary reformers, Moses was four thousand years ahead of his age.

Judged therefore either by the civil or criminal code he enjoined, or by those Ten Commandments which lie at the foundations of all human justice, and shall continue the supreme standard of morals so long as time endures, Moses claims precedence over all the sovereigns, and senators and legislators the world has ever seen. Like a magnificent Alp, whose green skirts are the nest of a nation, and whose top white and glistening, if terrestrial at all is something transfigured, our law-giver stands up in the horizon of history, not proud, but pre-eminent, a halo around his head, and an emancipated people at his feet, claiming to himself no credit, but rejoicing in their happiness, and pointing to that high source from which it all comes down.

At Sinai the tabernacle was set up. From the memorable night of the exodus there had always moved before the camp or hovered over it a mystic symbol, cloud by day and fire by night, the sign of cognizance of their celestial Leader

And now Jehovah said, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them," and to the invitation the people replied so willingly that gold and silver came in to the amount of more than a million of dollars. With this large offering,



THE TABERNACLE.

acting under Divine direction, Moses reared and furnished forth the tabernacle; and it was a great day, that new-year's day when it was at last erected. It was twelve months after their departure from Egypt, and the first new-year's day which they had spent in the wilderness. Everything was ready. At measured intervals were placed sockets or pediments of silver, and on these were set up columns of acacia-wood so thickly overlaid that they stood up like eight-and-forty golden pillars, joined together by transverse beams, similarly resplendent. Inside of these pillars were suspended gorgeous tapestries, with cherubim wrought into a ground alternately blue, purple and scarlet; and outside, the walls were covered successively by hair-cloth, by a sort of morocco leather, and on the top of all, as a protection from the weather, by a stout pall of badgers' skins; and the roof resembled the sides, so that if one could have entered and had a view of the whole interior, he would have found himself in an oblong

apartment, about fifty feet in length and one-third as broad, roofed over and hung round with curtains of delicate texture, all wimpling with the golden wings of cherubim. But inside the full length was never seen, for at the end ten cubits were cut off to form the Holy of Holies. This inner shrine was divided from the rest of the tabernacle by a veil or beautiful curtain of byssus, and contained the Ark of the Covenant. That ark was a golden chest, into which Moses put the two tables of the Law, Aaron's blossoming staff, an urn full of manna, and the book of the Covenant; and it was surmounted by a throne entirely golden, backed and over-canopied by two cherubs with outspread wings, a mercy-seat or throne of grace reserved for the Shekinah, for Him who, marching in the cloudy pillar, also sat between the cherubim. This inner shrine the High Priest entered alone, once a year. But the more spacious ante-room, called "the Holy Place," was accessible to all the priesthood. By night and day it derived its illumination from a massive candelabrum of seven branches, with lamps of oil-olive softly burning; and this apartment had an atmosphere exquisite with odor; for another prominent object in it was a golden altar, on which Aaron burned incense twice each day. Here also was the table of shew-bread. In the court of the congregation without were a large altar and a basin-fountain of brass. To construct this fountain or laver, the women of Israel surrendered their burnished mirrors, a free-will offering.

EGYPTIAN.

The tabernacle was a peripatetic shrine, a cathedral that could be carried about, a temple of canvas and tapestry which accompanied Israel in their wanderings, and which sufficed as a visible center of worship till such time as the waving

tapestry solidified into carvings of cedar, and the badger-skins were replaced by tall arcades of marble, and the tent had grown to a temple. The worship of the one living and true God there inaugurated now counts its adherents by hundreds of millions, and includes all that is worth naming of the world's intelligence and civilization. All the inhabitants of Europe are monotheists. Save a few savage tribes, and a handful of pagans from Asia, all the inhabitants of America are monotheists. Every Christian in the world is a monotheist, so is every Jew, so is every Mussulman. To-day one-half the people upon the globe worship the God of Moses.

When all the purposes of Israel's sojourn among the Sinai Mountains had been accomplished, the signal for their departure was given. They soon reach the southern border of the promised land, and send twelve men to explore the country. These spies, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua, report that however desirable the land might be for a possession, its acquisition was impracticable, so numerous and warlike were the inhabitants, and so well secured in their strongholds. Upon this, the people broke out into weeping, and a cry was raised to choose a new commander and hasten back to Egypt. The Lord then decreed that this generation should die in the wilderness, and their sons should enter Canaan in their stead. For thirty-eight years they wandered in the desert, during which nothing of their history is recorded. At the close of this period, arriving again at Kadesh-barnea, on the border of Palestine, they suffered from want of water, and expressed their discontent in language nearly as violent and unreasonable as their fathers used at Rephidim. This was naturally most discouraging and irritating to Moses. It seemed to indicate that a perverse, abject and servile spirit was too deeply ingrained in the Israelites to be ever pounded out, seeing it had survived thirty-eight years of discipline and training in the heart of the desert, and seeing that on the very first trial the new race had broken down in the same

way with their fathers. He might well regard their murmurs as portending a new and long stay in the wilderness, at a time when he and Aaron were expecting to conduct them into the promised land. He was directed to procure water from a rock as on a former occasion. The command this time was to "speak to the rock," and it would "give forth its water." Instead of speaking to the rock, he spoke to the people: "Hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock?" And instead of simply *speaking* to it, he raised the rod and dealt it two successive strokes. Water flowed sufficient for the whole camp and the cattle, clear, cool and eagerly gushing—enough for all the millions; but at the same moment a cup of wrath was put into the hand of Moses. Slight as his sin seems to us, and great as was the provocation, the blessing which was just within his grasp was forfeited, and he was subjected to the sentence of exclusion from the promised land. "The Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, Because ye *believed me not*, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." The precise offense seems to have been unbelief. If their temper had failed, the saddest thing was that their faith had also failed. This unexpected outbreak of the Israelites, whilst it took Moses and Aaron by surprise, for the instant went far to make these good men faithless or forgetful. "Has Jehovah's purpose been defeated? Has all this wearisome detention failed of its design in weeding out the murmurers and preparing the people for the promised rest? And through their miserable perversity, must we make up our minds to forty more years in the desert?" The man Moses was exceeding meek, and if for patience and a sweet submissiveness the palm had been assigned to any one besides, perhaps it would have been to Aaron his brother. But after all they were human. Their endurance was wonderful, but it was not inexhaustible. By the way they managed the miracle they spoiled its glory, and

what on God's side was a gift of pure grace, under their hard blows and hot words assumed the aspect of an angry Gospel.

It is not because a man stands high in the favor of his Maker, that he may expect to escape the temporal retributions of a fault; on the contrary, since he is not to sustain its eternal retributions, there is the greater reason why the temporal should not be remitted; for if they were, his sin would be wholly unvisited, and therefore apparently overlooked by God. None doubts that in that vast congregation, *all* have done far more than Moses to provoke the Almighty, and many will carry into Canaan unsanctified hearts and ungrateful spirits. But Moses had sinned, and sinned in the sight of all, and the uncommonness of his fault would only have made his going unpunished the more observable. There is not another registered instance during all the years which had elapsed since the coming out of Egypt, in which he had displayed the least deficiency in faith, but for his temporary distrust upon this occasion he must be shut out of Canaan. The mitigating circumstances of the sentence we will see shortly, when we come to look at the particulars of his death; but we proceed now to speak more fully of some points in his character than we have yet had the opportunity of doing.

As an *author* is it too much to say that Moses stands unrivaled? Apart from the surpassing grandeur of his subjects, even in the very manner of handling them, the world's oldest is its foremost writer. What other poet rises to heights or sustains a flight so lofty as Moses; in his dying song, for instance, his parting words to the tribes of Israel, ere he ascended Nebo to wave them his last farewell, and vanish forever from their wondering, weeping gaze? The inimitable pathos of his style, as illustrated in the story of Joseph, the tears and trembling voices of readers in all ages have acknowledged. In simple, tender, touching narrative, no passages in any other book will compare with his; and yet

so wide and varied is his range that the writings of Moses contain, infidels themselves being judges, the sublimest expressions man has spoken or penned. By universal consent no other book, ancient or modern, the production of the highest mind of the most refined and cultivated age, contains a sentence so sublime as this: "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light."

EGYPTIAN WOMAN.

As a *divine*, compared to his knowledge of the attributes and character of God, how gross the notions of the heathen, how puerile, dim and distorted the speculations of their greatest sages!

As to the mass of the people, they imputed crimes and vices to their gods which would nowadays consign men to the gallows, or banish them from decent society. But how pure and comprehensive Moses' estimate of the Divine character, of what we are to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of men. Since his day, removed from ours by four thousand years, science has made prodigious strides; but those who have discovered new elements, new forces, new worlds, new stars, new suns, have brought to light no new attribute of God, nor a single feature of His character with which Moses was not acquainted.

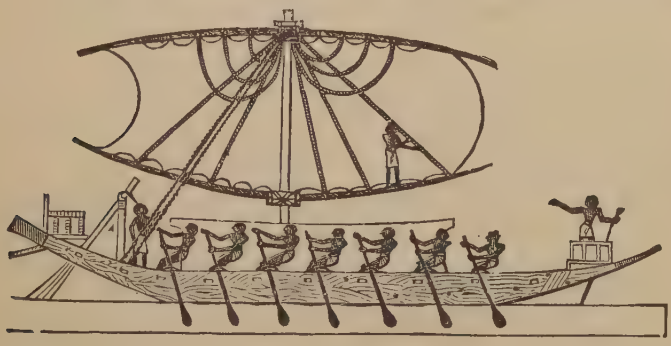
As a *leader*, Moses occupies a place no other man has approached, far less attained to. History records no such achievements as his, who without help from man struck off the fetters from three millions of slaves; placing himself at their head, led them forth from the land of bondage; reducing them to order, controlled more turbulent and subdued more stubborn elements than any before or since have had to deal with; formed a great nation out of such base materials; and casting into the shade the celebrated retreat of the ten

thousand Greeks, conducted to a successful issue the longest and hardest march on record, a march continued for forty years in the face of formidable enemies, through howling wildernesses and desert sands.

As the successful commander of an army numbering over half a million of men, Moses challenges our attention. On approaching Palestine, the office of the leader became blended with that of the general or the conqueror. By him the spies were sent to explore the country—men not of inferior position, as commonly in the Western armies—but men like Caleb and Joshua, of standing in their respective tribes. Against his advice took place the first disastrous battle at Hormah. To his guidance is ascribed the circuitous route by which the nation approached Palestine from the east, and to his generalship the two successful campaigns in which Sihon and Og were defeated. The narrative is told so shortly, that we are in danger of forgetting that at this last stage of his life, Moses must have been as much a conqueror and victorious soldier as Joshua.

As to personal traits and moral qualities, we have him described to us in one word, which our English version renders "meek." This is hardly an adequate reading of the Hebrew term, which should be "much enduring," continuing to bear, and represents, too, all that we now include in the word "disinterested." It brings before us the matchless patience and magnanimity of Moses which could endure any amount of personal abuse and obloquy, and through all continue to seek the welfare of his nation. All that is told of him indicates a withdrawal of himself, a preference of the cause of his people to his own interests, which makes him the most complete example of patriotism. Witness the unselfish, for its generosity and self-denial the matchless, part he acted at Sinai, when the idolatry of Israel had awoke all the terrors of the mount, and God Himself, provoked beyond all patience, was about to descend to sweep man, woman and child from

the face of the earth. "Let me alone," said Jehovah, addressing Moses, who, forgetting the wrongs he had suffered at their hands, had thrown himself between the people and an angry God, "Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them." Nor was that all: "And I will make of thee a great nation." A splendid offer! Yet one which not on this occasion only, but upon another, Moses declined; turning twice from a crown to fall on his knees, and pour out his soul to God in earnest prayers for the guilty people. He did more. Deeply as he abhorred their conduct toward Jehovah, keenly as he felt their ingratitude to himself, he returned from their camp to tell God that he could not, and did not wish to, outlive them. "Oh, this



BOAT OF THE NILE.

people," he cried, "have sinned a great sin, and have made their god of gold; yet now if Thou wilt forgive their sin!" But what if God will not? then with such patriotism as perhaps never burnt in human bosom, or burst from human lips, he exclaimed: "If not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book." I will sink or swim with my people! If they are to perish, let me not live to see it.

But after all, as we try to rest upon some prominent feature of his character, we find that his was an assemblage of great qualities. Calm and colossal, not so much distinguished by

his individual features as by the mighty deeds with which he is identified, stands out the figure of the Hebrew leader; and this we know, that between the romantic incidents of his birth and upbringing, his unparalleled achievements as the conductor of a national exodus, and his exalted function as the founder of the Hebrew commonwealth, no mere man has filled so large a space in the world's eye, or exerted so great and so enduring an influence on human history. All the great men of profane or sacred story possessed some prominent virtue or quality, which stood out in bolder relief than their other perfections. We think of the faith of Abraham, of the conscientiousness of Joseph, of the contrition of David, of the generosity of Jonathan, of the zeal of Elijah—but what was the dominant quality of Moses? It would be difficult to fix on any. It is not firmness, it is not perseverance, it is not disinterestedness, it is not patriotism, it is not confidence in God, it is not meekness, it is not humility, it is not forgetfulness of self. It is not any one of these. It is ALL of them. His virtues, his graces, were all equal to each other; and it was their beautifully harmonious operation and development which constituted his noble and all but perfect character. This was the greatness and glory of Moses. It is a kind of character rare in any man, and in no man historically known has it been so completely manifested. The exigencies of even those great affairs which engaged his thought, did not and could not call forth on any *one* occasion *all* the high qualities with which he was gifted. We find Moses equal to every occasion; he is never lacking in the virtue which the time and position call for, and by this we know that he possessed all the endowments demanded by even so high and unparalleled a career. When we reflect that he had all the learning of his age, and that he wanted none of the talents which constitute human greatness, and remember that such endowments are not invariably accompanied by high character and noble sentiments, we honor his humility more than his glory, and

venerate that Divine wisdom which raised up this extraordinary man, and called him forth at the moment when the world had need of him. We quit with reluctance the career and character of one whom all must regard as the greatest of woman born—with the exception of ONE only, and that One more than man.

We come now to the closing scene. Ever since the fatal day of Meribah, the prophet knew that he was doomed to die without setting his foot upon the land which was to form the heritage of his people. And now, when he receives a distinct intimation that the appointed time is come, and is directed to ascend a neighboring mountain, to render up his life, what is the foremost thought in his mind? Nothing that concerns himself, no regret of his own; all his thought is for the welfare of the people: "Let Jehovah, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, who may go out before them, and who may go in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd." Here is the same loftiness of spirit, rising above every thought of self, the same zeal for the honor of God, the same devoted concern for the welfare of the people, which had marked his whole career. We may wade through folios of history and biography, narrating the mighty deeds of warriors, statesmen and professed patriots, before we find another case equal to this in interest. And it seems a fitting conclusion to a life of such entire self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice, that the prophet was only permitted to see and not to enter the good land beyond the Jordan; thus carrying out to the last the idea that he was to live not for himself, but for his people.

Joshua having been appointed in his place, nothing remained for him to do but to pour out his heart before the people in lofty odes and eloquent blessings, and then ascend the mountain and die. The command was given to him

in language most simple and easy: "Go up and die." Had God been bidding Moses to a banquet, or directing him to perform the most ordinary duty, He could not have spoken more familiarly, or with less indication of requiring what was painful or difficult. And yet was there not much in the circumstances of Moses' death to try his faith? It is in all cases a solemn thing to die; and our nature when gathering itself up for the act of dissolution, seems to need all the prayers and kindnesses of friends, that it may be enabled to meet the last enemy with composure. The chamber in which a good man dies is ordinarily occupied by affectionate relatives; they stand around his bed to watch his every look, and catch his every word; they whisper him encouraging truths, and they speak cheeringly of the better land to which he is hastening, though they may often be obliged to turn away the face, lest he should be grieved by the tears which their own loss extorts. And all this detracts somewhat from the terror of dying. But no friend was to accompany Moses to Pisgah, no relative was to be near when he breathed out his soul. "Strange death-bed," he might say, "which I am ordered to ascend! Mine eye is not dimmed, my strength is not broken; what fierce and sudden sickness will seize me on that mount? Am I to linger there in unalleviated pain? And then, when my soul at length struggles free, must my body be left, a dishonored thing, to be preyed on by the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air?" Would you not expect such thoughts as these to have crowded and distressed the mind of the great law-giver? But calmly, as to his couch for a night's repose, he ascends the mountain from which he was never to return, and for the express purpose of grappling with death, he climbs the lofty summit; though but for his unshaken faith in Jehovah, he knew not in what shape, nor clothed with what terrors death

MUMMY.

might come; how, on that wild spot, he might be consumed with slow disease, or rapt away in a whirlwind, or stricken down by lightning. Enough for him that God had commanded. And never does Moses wear such an air of moral sublimity, as when we behold him leaving the camp and his beloved people, and climbing the summit, where, with the rock for his couch and the broad heaven for his roof, and far from all human companionship, he was to submit himself to the sentence: "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

We cannot follow Moses in this mysterious journey. If the law-giver had received a rebuke, this was more than compensated by the peerless distinction attending his exit. His humiliation only brought out more strikingly his real grandeur. Although the sentence shutting him out from Canaan was not literally reversed, its bitterness was greatly mitigated. From Nebo he looked down on the palm-trees of Jericho, close under his feet; and from the deep warm valley through which the Jordan was gleaming far across to yon boundless sea; from Jezreel with its waving corn, to Eshcol with its luxuriant vines; from Bashan with its kine, to Carmel with its rocks dropping honey; from Lebanon with its rampart of snow, south again to the dim edge of the desert; and as he feasted his eyes upon the rich landscape of Canaan, its fountains and brooks and olives and vines; as what had so long been the land very far off, and what to the fretful host in the wilderness had seemed no better than a myth or a mirage; as this splendid domain spread out, hill and valley, field and forest, in the bright garb of spring, the Lord said, "This is the land!" "This is the land which I sware unto Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, saying, I will give it to thy seed." But beautiful and overwhelming as it was, just then there began to rise on Moses' sight a still more wondrous scene. It was no longer the Jordan with its palms, but a river of water clear as crystal, and on either side of it a tree of life o'ercanopying. It was no longer Nebo's rocky summit, but a great white

throne, and round it light inaccessible. He had just heard the name of Abraham, and if this is not Abraham's self! and if he is not actually in Abraham's bosom! and in a better land than the land of promise!

"So Moses, the servant of the Lord, *died*." The spirit was gone home. Behind that countenance, still radiant with the beatific vision, no longer worked the busy brain, no longer went and came the mind which so long had conversed with God, and managed the affairs of the chosen people. Powerless is the hand which had swayed Jehovah's rod, and split the sea in sunder; and cold in its unconsciousness is that majestic presence before which proud Pharaoh learned to tremble. A corpse is all that now remains of the mighty prophet and law-giver, and there is no man there to bury him. But He who preserved his infant body amid the bulrushes, takes charge now of his lifeless remains. Those hands which had taken the law from God, those eyes which had seen His presence, those lips which had conversed with the Almighty, that face which had been irradiated with beams of heavenly glory, must not be neglected, though the soul is gone. "The Lord buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor." Wonderful entombment! No mortal hands dug the grave, no mortal voices chanted the requiem; but angels, "ministering spirits," composed the limbs and prepared the sepulchre!

"By Nebo's lonely mountain,
On yon side Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab
There lies a lonely grave.
And no man dug that sepulchre,
And no man saw it e'er;
For the angels of God upturned the sod,
And laid the dead man there.

"That was the grandest funeral
That ever passed on earth,
But no man heard the tramping,

Or saw the train go forth.
Noiselessly as the daylight
Comes when the night is done,
And the crimson streak on ocean's cheek
Grows into the great sun:

"Noiselessly as the spring-time
Her crown of verdure waves,
And all the trees on all the hills
Open their thousand leaves;
So, without sound of music,
Or voice of them that wept,
Silently down from the mountain's crown
The great procession swept.

"Perchance the bald old eagle,
On gray Bethpeor's height,
Out of his rocky eyrie,
Looked on the wondrous sight.
Perchance the lion stalking
Still shuns that hallowed spot,
For beast and bird have seen and heard
That which man knoweth not.

"But when the warrior dieth,
His comrades in the war,
With arms reversed and muffled drum
Follow the funeral car.
They show the banners taken,
They tell his battles won:
And after him lead his masterless steed,
While peals the minute-gun.

"Amid the noblest of the land
Men lay the sage to rest,
And give the bard an honored place,
With costly marbles drest,
In the great Minster transept
Where lights like glories fall,
And the choir sings, and the organ rings
Along the emblazoned wall.

"This was the bravest warrior
That ever buckled sword,

This the most gifted poet
That ever breathed a word;
And never earth's philosopher
Traced with his golden pen,
On the deathless page, truths half so sage
As he wrote down for men.

"And had he not high honor?
The hill-side for his pall,
To lie in state while angels wait
With stars for tapers tall;
And the dark rock pines with tossing plumes,
Over his bier to wave,
And God's own hand in that mountain land
To lay him in the grave?

"In that deep grave without a name,
Whence his uncoffined clay
Shall break again—most wondrous thought!
Before the judgment day;
And stand with glory wrapped around
On the hills he never trod,
And speak of the strife that won our life
With the incarnate Son of God.

"Oh, lonely tomb in Moab's land!
Oh, dark Bethpeor's hill!
Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
And teach them to be still.
God hath His mysteries of grace,
Ways that we cannot tell;
He hides them deep like the secret sleep
Of him He loved so well."

THE PROPHET OF THE SANCTUARY.

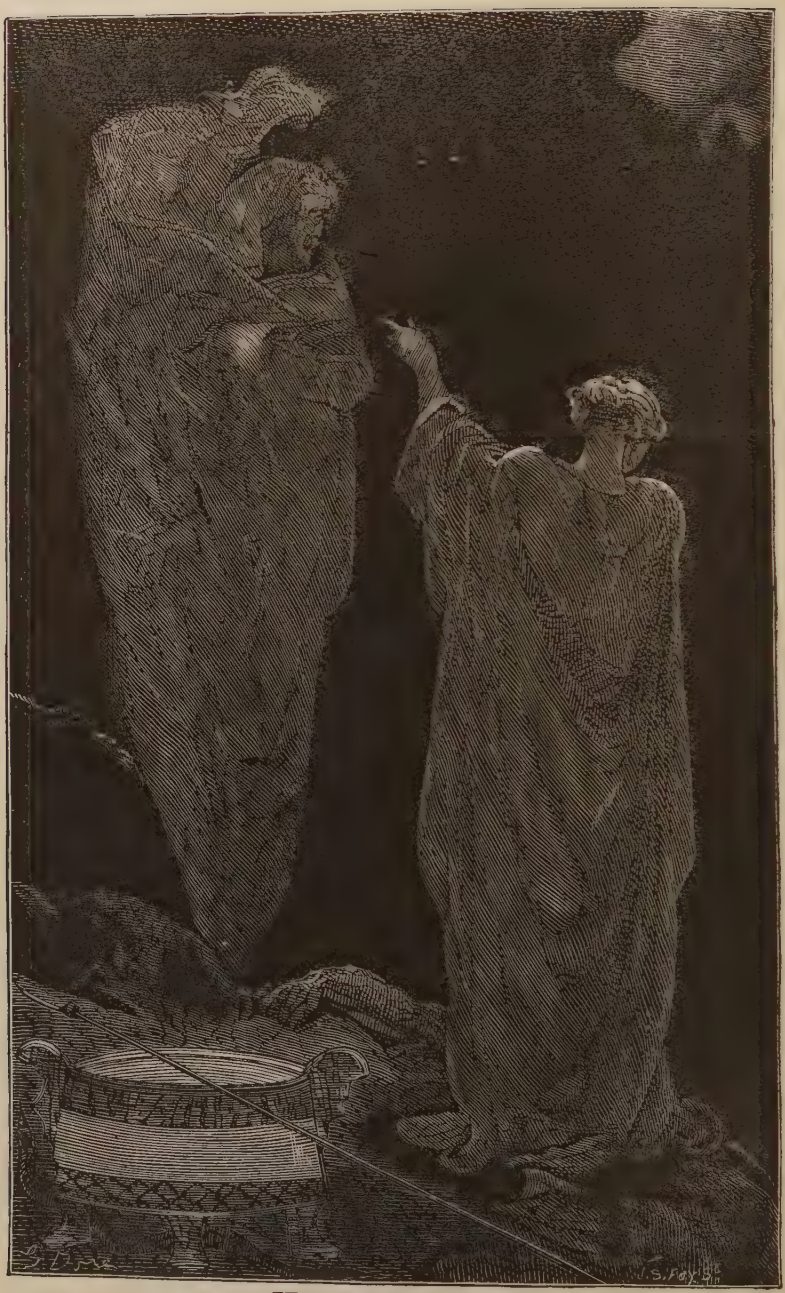
THE RAISING OF SAMUEL.

"Thou whose spell can raise the dead,
Bid the prophet's form appear."
"Samuel, raise thy buried head!
King, behold the phantom seer!"

Earth yawn'd; he stood the centre of a cloud:
Light changed its hue, retiring from his shroud.
Death stood all glassy in his fixèd eye;
His hand was wither'd and his veins were dry;
His foot, in bony whiteness, glittered there,
Shrunken and sinewless, and ghastly bare;
From lips that moved not and unbreathing frame,
Like cavern'd winds, the hollow accents came.
Saul saw, and fell to earth, as falls the oak,
At once, and blasted by the thunder-stroke.

"Why is my sleep disquieted?
Who is he that calls the dead?
Is it thou, O king? Behold,
Bloodless are these limbs, and cold:
Such are mine, and such shall be
Thine to-morrow, when with me:
Ere the coming day is done,
Such shalt thou be, such thy son.
Fare thee well but for a day,
Then we mix our mouldering clay;
Thou, thy race, lie pale and low,
Pierced by shafts of many a bow;
And the falchion by thy side
To thy heart thy hand shall guide;
Crownless, breathless, headless, fall,
Son and sire, the house of Saul!"

HEBREW MELODIES.



THE RAISING OF SAMUEL.

II.

SAMUEL.

His birth—Consecrated to God—His Childhood—His Prophetic Call—Judgment on the House of Eli Announced and Executed—Grandeur of the Narrative—Samuel judges Israel—Circuit Courts—His Sons Associated with Him—The People Desire a King—Samuel's Picture of a King—Anointing of Saul—Saul Prophesies—"Long Live the King"—Deliverance of Jabesh—Samuel's Integrity—Anointing of David—His Personal Appearance—Shepherd Life—His Character and Genius—His Poetry—The Psalms of Universal Adaptation—The College of the Prophets—David and Samuel at Naioth—Saul among the Prophets—Death of Samuel—The Witch of Endor—The Shade of Samuel—Death of Saul—David's "Song of the Bow."

It is on the mother of Samuel that our chief attention is fixed in the account of his birth. She is described as a woman of a high religious mission. Almost a Nazarite by practice, and a prophetess in her gifts, she sought from God the gift of the child, for which she longed with a passionate devotion of silent prayer; and when the son was granted, the name which he bore, and thus introduced into the world, expressed her sense of the urgency of her entreaty—*Samuel*, "the Asked or Heard of God." Living in the great age of vows, she had before his birth dedicated him to the office of a Nazarite. As soon as he was weaned, she herself, with her husband, brought him to the tabernacle at Shiloh, where she had received the first intimation of his birth, and there solemnly consecrated him. The hymn which followed this consecration, is the first of the kind in the sacred volume, and the finest utterance of the general desire for children which existed in Jewish females, and which exists in females still. We deduce from this not merely the inference that the Jews expected a Messiah, but also that there is in human

hearts a yearning after a nobler shape of humanity, and that this yearning is at once proof and prophecy of the permanence and progressive advancement of that race, which, notwithstanding ages of anguish and disappointment, continues to thirst for and to expect its own apotheosis. The womb is the fruitful mother of Messiahs; and though there can be but one "Mary Mother of Jesus," though the incomparable honor of giving birth to the world's Redeemer was hers alone —every wife may pray with Hannah to be the mother of love, of devotion, of duty, and may hope to be the mother of genius and strength, that shall make the world her debtor. There is a low type of woman where the joys and cares of maternity are shunned. It is a nobler stock that gives rise to those who are to elevate humanity, and prove the benefactors of the race.

CHILDHOOD.

Childhood is always attractive, and displays many agreeable features and engaging qualities that are worthy of the imitation of persons of mature age. "Suffer little children," said our blessed Saviour, "to come unto me, and forbid them not; for *of such is the kingdom of heaven*." "Except ye be *converted, and become as little children*, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Their docility, openness to conviction, absence of art and of guile, and other distinguishing features, are in the highest degree attractive, and often afford the purest enjoyment to those who are sick of the world's deceptions, and weary of contending with its prejudices. And next to the child-life of Jesus, the history of the infantile years of Samuel is perhaps the most fascinating narrative of the kind that we have in the Bible. One element of interest is the contrast of years—the friendship of the youthful priest and the aged Eli, the boy and the gray-headed old man. Writers of fiction often introduce the love of the aged and the young, and certainly nothing can be more beautiful or touching. And such

is the true picture that we have here: a pair of friends—childhood and old age standing to each other in the relation, not of teacher and pupil, but of friend and friend. It is striking to see the elder one retaining so much of freshness and simplicity as not to repel the sympathies of boyhood. It is pleasing to see the younger one so advanced and thoughtful, as not to find dull the society of one who has outlived excitability and passion.

Samuel's mother visited him yearly at Shiloh, and brought with her "a little coat." How her heart must have looked forward to this annual meeting, and how many thoughts and prayers must have been wrought into the little garment! Until his twelfth year, he continued to reside within the courts of the Lord's house, and was taught to call upon His name—attending upon the services, and assisting as he grew up, in such simple offices of the tabernacle as his years admitted of discharging. He seems to have slept within the holiest place, and his special duty was to put in order the sacred candlestick, and to open the doors at sunrise. It was whilst thus sleeping in the tabernacle that he received his prophetic call. The voice of the Lord called him by name. The sacred history, with all the striking simplicity of nature and truth, relates that on hearing the voice, the child ran to Eli, doubting nothing that it was he who had called him, and said, "Here am I." Being assured that Eli had not desired his attendance, Samuel, as directed, went again to rest. A second and a third time the same voice was heard to pronounce his name, and again and again the child arose and ran to Eli, and insisted that he was called. The high priest was now convinced that Samuel had really been called, but by no human voice; and he said, "Go, lie down, and it shall be if He call thee, that thou shalt say, speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth thee." Thus the aged man of God, superseded as the vehicle of Divine communication, conducts his pupil and rival to the presence-chamber of the king, and leaves him

there to be invested with the order which has been stripped off himself.

Again the voice came. Samuel answered as he was bidden, and received a message of awful nature to the indulgent old man under whose charge he was placed. Poverty, desolation, death to himself and his household, were denounced by the God he had offended. We cannot wonder that Samuel did not hasten to communicate the message, and that he thought

DEAD SEA.

with reluctance and alarm of conveying tidings so dreadful to his kind guardian and instructor. But on being adjured to conceal nothing, he "declared to him every word, and hid nothing from him;" thus evincing, in trying circumstances, that openness and strict regard to truth, which, to the end of life, were characteristic of him. And when Eli heard the dreadful sentence, every word of which must have fallen like

molten lead upon his heart, the poor old man, so small in active daring, but so great in passive suffering, broke forth into no vain lamentations or complaints. "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." And truly what seems good to Him *must* be good, however it seems to us.

A war now arose with the Philistines, and the Israelites having been defeated, carried forth the ark to the field of battle, the two sons of Eli accompanying it. The ark was taken and the priest slain. Many hearts waited with unusual anxiety, the tidings from the battle. Among them was the blind old Eli, who caused his seat to be placed by the way-side, that he might catch the first tidings from the war, "for his heart trembled for the ark of God." The news spread through the town before he heard it, for every one was reluctant to impart it to him. But he heard the stir and the lamentations through the city, and asked what this meant. The messenger, a fugitive from the battle, with his clothes rent, and earth strewn upon his head, then came before him. Eli's blindness spared him the sight of these ominous signs of the tidings he bore. Then "the man said to Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he said, what is there done, my son? And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines—and there hath been a great slaughter also among the people—and thy two sons, also, Hophni and Phinehas are dead—and THE ARK OF GOD IS TAKEN. And it came to pass when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from his seat backward, by the side of the gate, and his neck brake and he died."

The manner in which this sad tale is told, far excels anything of the kind which the wide range of literature can furnish. It is one of those traits of pure and simple grandeur in which the Scriptures are unequaled. We are reminded of the two lines of Homer, in which Antilochus announces to Achilles the death of Patroclus:

"Patroclus is no more. The Grecians fight
For his bare corse, and Hector hath his arms."

Of this passage the critic Eustathius says: "This speech of Antilochus may be cited as a model of emphatic brevity in announcing tidings so terrible, for in two verses it contains all that can really be told; the death of Patroclus—by whom he was slain, the combat around his corpse, and that his arms were in the hands of the enemy. The tragic poets of Greece have not always imitated this grand simplicity; and Euripides, in particular, has the fault of making long recitals on trifling occasions. But Homer only, in this, ought to be followed. In great distresses, nothing is more absurd than for a messenger to impart his tidings in long discourses and pathetic descriptions. He speaks without being understood, for those to whom he addresses himself have no time or heart to pay attention. The first word which enables them to apprehend the calamity is enough for them, and they are deaf to all besides." Now this Homeric rule of fit brevity in messages of grief, is still more strongly, and with more exquisite propriety, exemplified in the Scriptures, which abound in passages unapproachable even by Homer, for significant brevity and sublime abruptness. And while we regard the literary beauties of the Bible as of secondary importance, yet the *secondary* matters of the Bible surpass in interest the *first* matters of other things; and although we do not, as the Mohammedans with the Koran, point to the mere literary composition of the Bible as a standing miracle, and a sufficient evidence of Divine authority, it is not the less pleasant to be able to show that the book of God, coming to us through the imperfect channel of human language, surpasses in manner, no less than in matter, all other books.

It is twenty years before we hear anything more of Samuel, and then he appears calling the nation to repentance, and judging Israel. The intervening period seems to have been a season of deep degeneracy, which drew down on the chosen

people the vengeance of heaven, and subjected them to the heavy yoke of neighboring nations. The severe oppression of the Philistines brought them to think on their ways, and Samuel proposed that a day of fasting and humiliation for national sins should be held. On this occasion he presided, not merely in his capacity of prophet, but as the supreme civil head of the nation. The Philistines rightly considering these proceedings as equivalent to an insurrection against their authority, drew together a force capable, in the defenseless condition of Israel, of bearing down all resistance; but on the supplication of Samuel, the Almighty took the cause of His repentant people into His own hand, and utterly discomfited their enemies.

For the more effectual administration of justice, Samuel now instituted the practice, which has so commonly obtained in later times, of holding courts in different central situations throughout the country. His residence was in "Ramah, and there he judged Israel; and there he went from year to year *in circuit* to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places." The discharge of his judicial functions and his administration of the whole civil polity of the State, was characterized by wisdom, and by integrity the most unimpeachable. As the accredited minister of the God of Israel, he conducted religious affairs with that simplicity of heart and entire devotion to every intimation of God's will, which so eminently distinguished him when a child, under the guardianship of the aged Eli. And though we hear of no military exploits performed by him personally, yet we are told that under his administration "the Philistines were subdued, and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel; and there was peace between Israel and the Amorites." But his multifarious duties brought early upon him the infirmities of age, and his two sons were associated with him in the judicial functions of his office. Their corruption exasperated the people, and led

them to demand the retirement of himself and them from the government of the State, and the immediate appointment of a king to rule over them, and to lead them in war. Samuel's conduct on this trying occasion is no less worthy of respect than on all others. We find not an attempt made to excuse or continue in office his sons, nor a single remonstrance against the injustice, ingratitude and folly of extruding himself also, whose integrity none had dared to impeach, and whose long

JERICHO.

services and guardian care were invaluable to the community. He has immediate recourse to God for illumination and guidance. God tells him to yield to the wishes of the people; comforts him by the assurance of the Divine sympathy, and the knowledge of his identification with the Divine cause: "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me;" and instructs him to enter a solemn protest against the change

they sought, and inform them what should be "the manner of the king" that should reign over them.

WHAT A KING IS.

And are not all after-satire and invective against monarchy and kings condensed in Samuel's picture of the approaching "king stork" of Israel? "He will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and he will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectioners, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your *goodliest young men, and your asses*, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep; and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king, which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day." What a quiet, refreshing vein of sarcasm enlivens the stern truth of this passage. Sheep and asses are the last and least victims to the royal vulture, men and women are his favorite quarry.

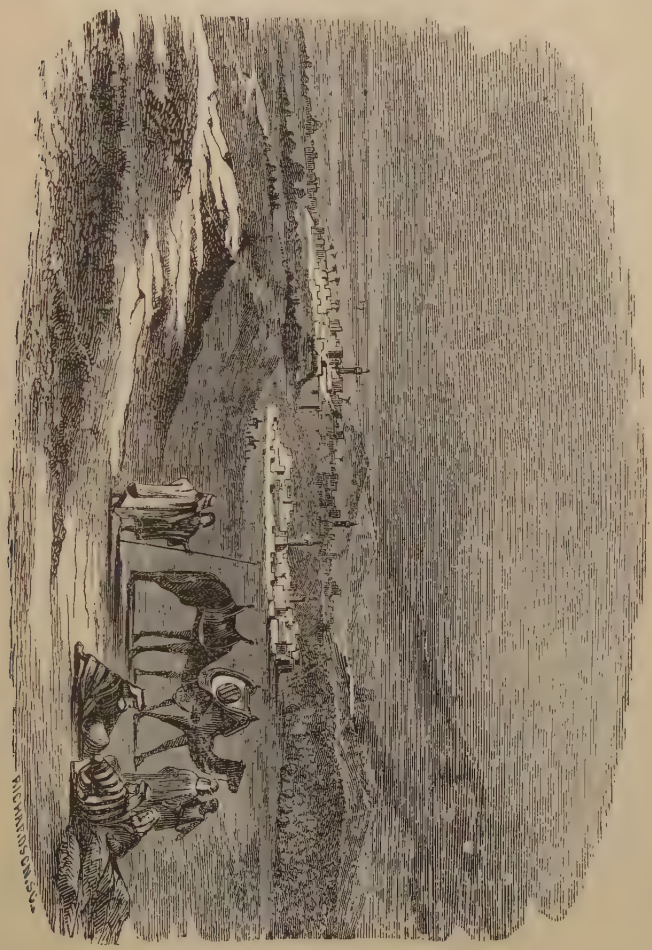
SAUL.

Under Divine guidance, Samuel soon finds for the people the king whom they had demanded. Saul is, we may say, the first character of the Jewish history which we are able to trace out in any minuteness of detail. He is the first in regard to whom we can make out that whole connection of a large family, father, uncle, cousin, sons, grandsons, which, as a modern historian well observes, is so important in making

us feel that we have acquired a real acquaintance with any personage of a past age. We do not propose, however, to transfer his genealogical tree from the pages of the Bible to our own, but proceed to narrate the circumstances connected with his anointing by the prophet.

A drove of asses had gone astray on the mountains, and Saul had been sent after them by his father, in company with a trustworthy servant, who acted as guide and guardian of the young man. After a three days' circuit they arrived at the foot of a hill surmounted by a town, when Saul proposed to return home, but was deterred by the advice of the servant, who suggested that before doing so they should consult the "Man of God," the "seer," as to the fate of the asses, securing his oracle by a present of a quarter of a silver shekel. Approaching the city, they made inquiry for the seer of some young maidens on their way to draw water, and the reply they received contained an accurate account, even to details, of the religious service which was about to take place. The judge had arrived; and there was to be a sacrifice; the people would not eat till he came; he would pronounce a blessing, after that there would be a select feast; they might catch the seer as he came out on his way to the sacred eminence. It is interesting to note what a marked change had taken place in religious affairs in Israel during the administration of Samuel as prophet and judge. Had a man come to a city in Israel at the beginning of his career, there would have been no sacrifice going on, or if there had, no one would have been found so accurately familiar with the whole service; for then "men abhorred the offering of the Lord." But now, the first chance passer-by could run through it all as a thing habitual; as now, in any of our villages, the order of worship and the hours of service are things familiar. Thus men might forget Samuel, and crowd around his successor, but Samuel's work would not be forgotten. He had impressed himself deeply upon the religious life of the nation. And in its civil

polity, too, y ars after he was quiet and silent under ground, his courts in Bethel and Mizpeh would form the precedents and the germ of the national jurisprudence. Thus men die



life passes, mind decays, but work is permanent. Through ages, through eternity, what you hav done for man and God remains. Take courage, workers, deeds can never die.

At the gate of the city Saul and his companion meet the Seer for the first time. A Divine intimation had indicated to him the approach and the future destiny of the youthful Benjamite. Surprised at his language, but still obeying his call, they ascended to the high place, and in the inn or caravansera at the top found a number of guests assembled, among whom they took the chief seats. In anticipation of some distinguished stranger, Samuel had bade the cook reserve a boiled shoulder, from which Saul, as the chief guest, was bidden to tear off the first morsel. They then descended to the city, and a bed was prepared for Saul on the house-top. At daybreak Samuel roused him. They descended again to the skirts of the town, and there (the servant having left them) Samuel poured over Saul's head the consecrated oil, and with a kiss saluted him as ruler of the nation. From that moment a fresh life dawned upon him. Each stage of his returning, as of his outgoing route, is marked with the utmost exactness, and at each stage he meets the incidents which, according to Samuel's prediction, were to mark his coming fortunes. By the sepulchre of his mighty ancestress —known then, and known now, as Rachel's tomb—he met two men, who announced to him the recovery of the asses. There his lower cares were to cease. By a venerable oak he met three men carrying gifts of kids and bread, and a skin of wine, as an offering to Bethel. There, as if to indicate his new dignity, two of the loaves were offered to him. By the hill of God he met a company of prophets descending with musical instruments, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he prophesied. And it passed into a proverb, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

This is what may be called the private, inner view of his call. There was another outer call, which is related independently. An assembly was convened by Samuel at Mizpeh, and lots were cast to find the tribe and the family which was to produce the king. Saul was named, and found hid in

the circle of baggage which surrounded the encampment. His stature at once conciliated the public feeling, and for the first time the shout was raised, afterward so often repeated down to modern times, "Long live the king!" The monarchy, with that conflict of tendencies, of which the mind of Samuel is the best reflex, was established in the person of the young prophet, whom he had thus called to this perilous eminence.

Saul had the one gift by which in primitive times a man seemed to be worthy of rule. He was "goodly," "there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he," "from his shoulders and upward he towered above all the people." It is as in the Homeric days of Greece. Agamemnon, like Saul, is head and shoulders taller than the people. Like Saul, he has that peculiar air and dignity, expressed by the Hebrew word which we translate "good" or "goodly." In the Mussulman traditions, the only trait of Saul which is preserved, refers to his personal appearance. He is "the tall one." In the Hebrew songs of his own time he was known by a more endearing, but not less expressive indication of his own grace. His stately, towering form, standing under the pomegranate tree above the precipice of Mignon, or on the pointed crags of Michmash, or the rocks of Engedi, claimed for him the title of the "wild roe, the gazelle," "the pride and glory of Israel."

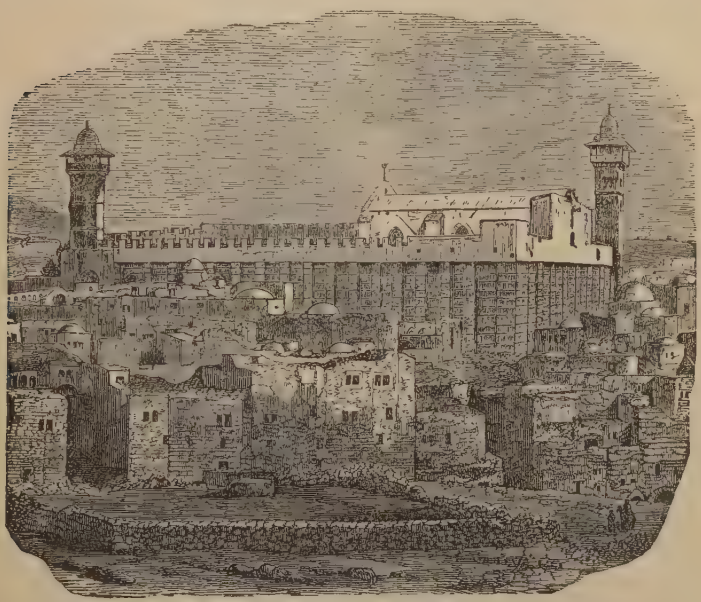
His residence was still at the seat of the family—a beacon-like cone, conspicuous among the uplands of Benjamin. There, king as he was, he might be seen following his herd of cattle in the field, and driving them home at the close of the day up the steep ascent of the city. A loud wail, such as goes up in an Eastern city at the tidings of some great calamity, strikes his ear. He said, "What aileth the people that they weep?" They told him the news that had reached them from their kinsmen beyond the Jordan. The work which Jephthah had wrought in that wild region had to be done

over again. Ammon was advancing, and the first victims were the inhabitants of Jabesh, connected by a romantic adventure of the previous generation with the tribe of Benjamin. This one spark of outraged family feeling was needed to awaken the dormant spirit of the sluggish giant. He was a true Benjamite from first to last. "The Spirit of God came upon him," as on Samson. His shy, retiring nature vanished. His anger flamed out, and he took two oxen from the herd that he was driving, and (in accordance with the like expedient in the earlier time, only in a gentler form), he hewed them in pieces, and sent their bones through the country with the significant warning, "Whosoever cometh not after Saul, and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen." The people rose as one man. Jabesh was rescued. The deliverance of his own tribe seated him on the throne securely. The east of the Jordan was regarded as specially the conquest of Saul. The people of Jabesh never forgot their debt of gratitude.

In their enthusiasm the people wished now to put to death those who at first had refused to give in their adhesion to Saul. But the king said, "There shall not a man be put to death this day; for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel." "Then said Samuel to the people, Come and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there." Agreeably to this suggestion, the monarchy was inaugurated afresh. And Samuel avails himself of this occasion, the king now being firmly established on the throne, and the people convened in solemn assembly, to call upon them to bring forward charges of corruption in office against himself, if any such they had. "I have hearkened unto your voice, and have made a king over you. I am old and gray-headed, and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am, witness against me before the Lord, and before His anointed. Whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes

therewith, and I will make restitution to you." On this appeal, the people had the candor to bear unanimous testimony to the integrity of Samuel. "Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand."

In these transactions, we have the most signal example afforded in the Old Testament, of a great character reconciling himself to a changed order of things, and of the Divine



MOSQUE AT HEBRON (MACHPHELAH).

sanction resting on his acquiescence. Samuel, however, continued to judge Israel "all the days of his life." And necessarily, in the discharge of his prophetic office, he often came across the king's path. Yet, he treated Saul, who was in some sense his successor, not only with fairness, but with the greatest courtesy and kindness. Even when the king had, by repeated defections from duty, incurred the displeasure of

heaven, and when Samuel had been sent to him for the last time to intimate the unalterable determination of God to "rend" from him "the kingdom of Israel, and give it to another," even on that occasion he was prevailed on, by Saul's earnest entreaty, still to countenance him so far as to attend with him on a public occasion of religious worship. Indeed, such was the interest he took in Saul's welfare, and such his grief for his fall, that the command of God to him to anoint a successor to the throne, seems to have been issued somewhat in the tone of rebuke. "How long, said the Lord unto Samuel, wilt thou mourn for Saul? Seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel: go, and I will send you to Jesse, the Bethlehemite, for I have provided me a king among his sons."

And now David, harp in hand, comes on the scene. There was a practice once a year, at Bethlehem, of holding a sacrificial feast, at which Jesse, as the chief proprietor of the place, presided, with the elders of the town, and from which no member of the family ought to be absent. At this or such like feast Samuel suddenly appeared, driving a heifer before him, and having in his hand his long horn filled with the consecrated oil preserved in the tabernacle at Nob. The elders of the little town were terrified at his coming, but were reassured by the august visitor, and invited by him to the ceremony of sacrificing the heifer. The heifer was killed. The party were waiting to begin the feast. Samuel stood with his horn to pour forth the oil, which seems to have been the usual mode of invitation to begin a feast. He was restrained by a Divine control as son after son passed by. Eliab, the eldest, by his height and his countenance, seemed the natural counterpart of Saul, whose successor the prophet came to select. But a king was not now to be chosen because head and shoulders taller than the rest. "Samuel said unto Jesse, are these all thy children? And he said, there remaineth yet the youngest, and behold he keepeth the sheep."

This is our first introduction to the future king. From the sheepfolds on the hill-side the boy was brought in. He took his place at the village feast, when with a silent gesture, perhaps with a secret whisper in his ear, the sacred oil was poured by the prophet over his head. We are enabled to fix his appearance at once in our minds. It is implied that he was of short stature, thus contrasting with his tall brother Eliab, with his rival Saul, and with his gigantic enemy of Gath. He had red or auburn hair, such as is not unfrequently seen in his countrymen of the East at the present day. His bright eyes are especially mentioned, and generally he was remarkable for the grace of his figure and countenance, well made, and of immense strength and agility. In swiftness and activity (like his nephew Asabel) he could only be compared to a wild gazelle, with feet like harts' feet, with arms strong enough to break a bow of steel. He carried a switch or wand in his hand, and a scrip or wallet round his neck, to carry anything that was needed for his shepherd's life, and a sling to ward off beasts or birds of prey.

DAVID WITH HIS SLING.

Such was the outer life of David, when he was "taken from the sheepfolds, to feed Israel according to the integrity of his heart, and to guide them by the skillfulness of his hands." It is the prelude of simple innocence which stands out in such marked contrast to the vast and checkered career which was to follow.

The scene of his pastoral life was doubtless that wide undulation of hill and vale round the village of Bethlehem, which reaches to the very edge of the desert of the Dead Sea. There stood the "Tower of Shepherds." There dwelt the herdsman

prophet, Amos. There, in later centuries, shepherds were still "watching over their flocks by night." Amidst those free, open uplands, his solitary wandering life had enabled him to cultivate the gift of song and music which he had apparently learned in the schools of Samuel, where possibly the aged prophet may have first seen him. Accordingly, when the body-guard of Saul were discussing with their master where the best minstrel could be found to drive away his madness by music, one of them suggested "a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite." And when Saul, with the absolute control inherent in the idea of an Oriental monarch, demanded his services, the youth came in all the simplicity of his shepherd life, driving before him an ass laden with bread, with a skin of wine and a kid, the natural produce of the well-known vines and grain-fields and pastures of Bethlehem.

HARE OF MOUNT LEBANON.

At first we find David as simple and noble a child of God, nature and genius, as ever breathed. A shepherd boy, watching now the lambs, and now the stars, his sleep is peradventure haunted by dreams of high enterprise and coming glory, but his days are calm and peaceful. And yet this boy, even before he was sent to the camp of Israel, had wet his hands in the blood of a lion and a bear. This had given him a modest sense of his own strength, and perhaps begun to circulate a secret thrill of ambition through his veins; and when he obeyed the command of Jesse to repair to his brethren with the host, it might be with a foreboding of triumph, and the smelling of the battle afar off. We can conceive few

subjects fitter for picture or poetry, than that of the young David measuring the mass of steel—Goliath—with an eye which mingled in its ray, wonder, eagerness, anger, and

> "That stern joy which warriors feel,
> In foemen worthy of their steel."

A hundred battles looked forth in that lingering, longing, insatiate glance. The giant fell before the smooth sling-stone. The result on David's mind is not quite so evident; but we think that all the praises and promotion he received did not materially affect the simplicity of his habits, or the integrity of his purposes. Nor did at first the persecution of Saul much exasperate his spirit, balanced as that was by the love of Jonathan. But his long-continued flight and exile, the insecurity of his life, the converse he had with "wild men and wild usages" in the cave of Adullam and the wilderness of Ziph, although they failed in weaning him from his God, or his Jonathan, or even from Saul, did not fail somewhat to embitter his generous nature, and to render him less fitted for bearing the prosperity which at last became his. Even after he reached the throne of his father-in-law, there remained long obscure contests with the remnant of Saul's party, sudden inroads from the Philistines, and a sullen, dead resistance on the part of the old heathen inhabitants of the land, to annoy his spirit. And when at length he had taken the stronghold of Jebus, and brought up the ark of the Lord to the city of David, when the Philistines were bridled, the Syrians smitten, the Ammonites chastised, and their city on the point of being taken—when he had thus reached almost the summit of prosperity, from this very pride of place David fell, fell foully, but fell not forever. From that hour, his life ran on in a current of disaster checkered with splendid successes; it was a tract of irregular and ragged glory, tempering at last into a troubled yet beautiful sunset.

A noble nature, stung before its sin, and seared before its time, contending between the whirlpool of passion and the strong

still impulses of poetry and faith, ruling all spirits except his own, and yet forever seeking to regulate it too, sincere in all things, in sin and in repentance, but sincerest in repentance—often neglecting the special precept, but ever loving the general tenor of the law, unreconciled to his age or circumstances, and yet always striving after such a reconciliation, harassed by early grief, great temptations, terrible trials in advanced life, and views necessarily dim and imperfect—David nevertheless retained to the last his heart, his intellect, his simplicity, his devotion, above all, his sincerity. His character is checkered, but the stripes outnumber the stains, and the streaks of light outnumber both. In his life there is no lurking-place, all is plain; the heights are mountains, the hills of holiness, where a free spirit walks abroad in singing robes, the valleys are depths, out of which you hear the voice of a prostrate penitent pleading for mercy; but nothing is or can be concealed, since it is God's face which shows both the lights and shadows of the scene.

DRESS OF JEWISH HIGH PRIEST.

David, if not the greatest or best of inspired men, was certainly one of the most extraordinary; and his genius reflects the phases of his general character. It is a high, bold energy, combining the fire of the warrior and the finer enthusiasm of the lyric poet. This is its general tone, but it undergoes numerous modifications. At one time, it rises into a swell

of grandeur, in which the strings of his harp shiver, as if a storm were the harper. Again, it sinks into a deep, solitary plaint, like the cry of the bittern in the lonely pool. At a third time, it is a little gush of joy, a mere smile of devout gladness transferred to his strain. Again, it is a quick and earnest cry for deliverance from present danger. Now, his Psalms are fine, general moralizings, and now they involve heart-searching self-examinations; now they are prophecies, and now notes of defiance to his enemies; now pastorals, and now bursts of praise. Few of them are fancy-pieces, or elaborated from the mind of the poet alone: most are founded upon facts which have newly occurred, whether those facts are distinctly enunciated, or only implied. David is flying from Saul, and he strips off a song, as he might a garment, to expedite his flight; or he is in the hold in the wilderness, and he sings a strain to soothe his anxious soul; or he has fallen into a grievous sin, and his penitence blossoms into poetry; and so in every case the flower stands rooted in truth; the poetry is just *fact on fire*. Suppose a Wallace, a Napoleon, or a Washington to have let off in verse the spray of their adventures, successes, escapes and agonies; suppose we had Napoleon's song of Lodi, or his fugitive poetry during the campaigns that sent him to Elba and St. Helena; these would bear some resemblance to the burning life of David's Psalms.

How far his early shepherd life produced any of the existing Psalms may be questioned. But it can hardly be doubted that it suggested some of their most peculiar imagery. In the twenty-third Psalm we have the first direct expression of the religious idea of a shepherd, afterward to take so deep a root in the heart of Christendom, and as the Psalmist describes his dependence on the shepherd-like providence of God, we trace his recollection of his own crook and staff, of some green oasis or running stream in the wild hills of Judea, and some happy feast spread with flowing oil and festive wine

beneath the rocks, at the mouth of some deep and gloomy ravine. And to this period may best be referred the first bursts of delight in natural beauty that sacred literature contains. Many a time the young shepherd must have had leisure to gaze in wonder on the moonlit and starlit sky, on the splendor of the rising sun rushing like a bridegroom out of his canopy of clouds; on the terrors of the storm, with its long rolling peals of thunder, broken only by the dividing flashes of the forks of lightning, as of glowing coals of fire. Well

SEA OF GENNESARET.

may the Mussulman legends have represented him as understanding the language of birds, as being able to imitate the thunder of heaven, the roar of the lion, the notes of the nightingale.

David was, in the highest sense of the word, a poet. He has left us elegies, odes, triumphal songs, descriptive pieces, and sacred lyrics, in which every chord of the human heart, every emotion of the soul, is touched with a master hand.

So deeply does he sound the depths of man's nature, so loftily does he soar to the gates of light, that no poet has ever lived whose ideas have become so much the common property of nations, none in whose beautiful words the hopes, the fears, the joys, the griefs, of the spiritual man have found such adequate expression. Manners, costumes, outer forms of life, forever change; but the unchanging character of that which is really man, is by nothing more strikingly evinced than by the fact, that for three thousand years, and in many different lands and languages, the words of David have given voice to the pious thoughts and devout feelings of millions, and are no less appropriate, in this day, in the mouth of the mechanic, the farmer, the statesman or the divine, than they were of old to the men who sat beneath the fig-trees and the vines of Canaan. In the words of an eloquent Israelite,[1] "As an exponent of the mysteries of the human heart, as a soother of the troubled spirit, to whose harp do the people of England fly for sympathy and solace? Is it to Byron or Wordsworth, or even the myriad-minded Shakespeare? No; the most popular poet in England is the sweet singer of Israel. 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon' won for England its boasted liberties; and the Scotch achieved their religious freedom, chanting upon their hill-sides the same canticles which cheered the heart of Judah amidst their glens."

But other lands, besides the British Isles, have vibrated under the touch of these Hebrew melodies. The lone hand of a Luther, holding up his banner before the eyes of Europe, has trembled the less that it was stretched out to the tune of these heroic Psalms; and through Christendom David has been the chief singer of the Church, and the hold in the wilderness is still its grand orchestra.

Wild, holy, tameless strains, how have ye ran down through ages, in which large poems, systems, and religions have perished; firing the souls of poets, kissing the lips of children,

[1] Disraeli.

smoothing the pillows of the dying, storming the warrior to heroic rage, perfuming the chambers of solitary saints, and clasping into one the hearts and voices of thousands of assembled worshipers; tinging many a literature, and finding a home in many a land; and still ye seem as fresh, and young, and powerful as ever; yea, preparing for even mightier triumphs than when first chanted! Britain, Germany and America now sing you; but you must yet awaken the dumb millions of China, India, and Japan.

THE COLLEGE OF THE PROPHETS.

At one period, when the growing popularity of David had led to the fixed and avowed purpose on the part of Saul to slay him, he took refuge with Samuel at Ramah. Near this place, at the rural hamlet of Naioth, the prophet had established a college of religious young men. They were instructed in sacred learning and religious exercises, and were led to cultivate, especially by psalmody and music, the devotional feelings which might fit them, when occasion called, to become the messengers of God, and teachers of the people. Here David found a sanctuary. And here he was in an atmosphere congenial to his best feelings, his highest tastes and holiest aspirations. Here his accomplishments in sacred minstrelsy and song had ample scope and exercise, enabling him to join heart and soul in their harmonious "prophesyings," and doubtless endearing him greatly to the good men who had their quiet dwelling there. There were probably moments when, feeling sick of the turmoils of public life, and tired of the persecutions and suspicions which followed him, he would have been content to abandon his high career for the peaceful and holy life he was now allowed to share. It may even be possible that such was his intention, and that he hoped this voluntary retirement would abate the suspicions of Saul, and mollify his hatred.

But it was not so to be. When Saul learned to what place

David had retired, he sent a body of men to apprehend him. These men no sooner came to the sacred place, and beheld the prophets engaged in their sacred exercises, led by the venerable Samuel, than their hearts were smitten. They felt that they dared not attempt any violence, and they stood contentedly, swelling by their voices the loud chorus of praise to God.

This occurred to two other sets of emissaries, making three in all; and at last Saul determined to go himself, and execute on the spot the fell purposes of his will. So forth he went. On his approach to Ramah, he came to the great well of Sechu, and finding there a number of people who had come from the town for water, he inquired of them where Samuel and David were. On hearing that they were at Naioth, he turned his steps in that direction; but he had proceeded only a little way when the Spirit which had moved his messengers fell upon him also, with this difference, that they had not thus been moved till they reached the presence of Samuel and his pupils; whereas Saul felt the Spirit come upon him while he was on the road, giving him for the time the heart of another man. The messengers, and Saul himself on a former occasion (soon after his anointing by Samuel), may be supposed to have been influenced by what they saw and heard when they came into the presence of the prophets; but now the heart of Saul is moved in the absence of all such associations, as if purposely to show that the change wrought in him was the immediate work of Him who holds the hearts of all men in His hand. It showed that this power was not confined to place or persons, and that the prophesyings of Naioth were owing to no influence of example or of sympathy, to no intoxicating vapors, or to the temperature of the air, as was suspected of some of the heathen oracles of old.

SAUL AMONG THE PROPHETS.

Thus the king went on, singing in high excitement the praises of God; and when he came to Naioth, and entered

the presence of Samuel, he cast off his weapons, and the outer robes which belonged to his rank, and stood among the sons of the prophets as one of themselves, taking his part in their holy chants. Thus disarrayed of all that marked the king or the warrior, Saul, when the "prophesyings" were ended, lay down exhausted or entranced all the remainder of that day, and all the ensuing night. David took advantage of his condition to make his escape.

The death of Samuel is described as taking place in the year of the close of David's wanderings. It is said with peculiar emphasis, as if to mark the loss, that "*all* the Israelites were gathered together" from all parts of this hitherto divided country, and "lamented him, and buried him," not in any consecrated place, nor outside the walls of the city, but within his own house, thus in a manner consecrated by being turned into his tomb. But he was not permitted to rest in his grave. In the loss of all the usual means of consulting the Divine will, Saul determined, with that wayward mixture of superstition and religion which marked his whole career, to apply to one of the necromancers who had escaped his persecution. She was a woman living at Endor, on the other side of Little Hermon. Let us look at the actors in this celebrated scene.

Samuel we know—Samuel whose history we have just traced—brought up in Hannah's hand to the temple service; with his curling locks and "little coat" officiating as a young priest; awakened at midnight by the voice of God—through whose little throat came accents of Divine wrath which stunned Eli's heart, and made the flesh-hooks of his sons tremble amid their sacrilege—who stood behind the smoke of the sacrifice of the sucking lamb, with his hands uplifted to heaven, while behind were his cowering countrymen, and before, the army of the Philistines, and above, a blue sky, which gradually darkened into tempest, thunder, dismay and destruction to the invaders; who hewed Agag in pieces;

who entered amazed Bethlehem, and neglecting the tall sons of Jesse, chose the fair-haired and blooming child of genius who at Gilgal, summoned the lightnings, which said to him, "Here we are," and who at last was buried with but one mourner, "all Israel," which "rose and buried him." Son of the barren woman, consecrated to God from thy birth, "king-maker," lord of the thunders, even the strong grave cannot secure thee! Once more thou must look up from below to perform an act of king-quelling power.

The second actor in the scene is Saul, whose character is more complex in its elements. Indolent, yet capable of great exertion; selfish, yet with sparks of generosity; fitful in temper, vindictive in disposition, confessedly brave, irregularly liberal, possessed of strong attachments, stronger hatreds and jealousies, neither a tyrant nor a good prince, neither thoroughly bad nor good, whom you neither can "bless nor ban," he is one of the nondescripts of history He reminds us most of the gloomy tyrant of Scotland—Macbeth. Like him, he has cemented his tottering throne with blood; like him, he is desperate, the Philistines are upon him, David is at a distance, Samuel sleeps in Ramah, God has refused to answer him by prophets, or Urim, or dreams; and he must now, like Macbeth in his extremity, go and knock at the door of hell.

The third actor is the witch of Endor. A borderer between earth and hell, her qualities are rather those of the former than of the latter. She has little weird or haggard grandeur. So far as we can apprehend her, she was a vulgar conjurer, herself taken by surprise, and caught in her own snare. She owns little kindred to the witches of "Macbeth," with their faces faded and their raiment withered in the infernal fire; their *supernatural age* and ugliness; the wild mirth which mingles with their malice; the light, dancing measure to which their strains are set, and which adds greatly to their horror, as though a sentence of death were given

forth in doggerel; the odd gusto with which they handle and enumerate all unclean and abominable things; the strange sympathy with which they may almost be said to *fancy* their victims; their dream-like conveyance; the new and complete mythology with which they are allied; and the uncertainty in which one is left as to their nature, origin and history.

Such are the actors. How striking the scene! We must figure for ourselves the witch's place of abode. The shadows of night are resting on Mount Tabor. Four miles south of it lies a ravine, deep sunk and wooded. It is a dreary and deserted spot, hedged round by a circle of evil rumors, through which nothing but despair dare penetrate. But there a torrent wails to the moon, and the moon smiles lovingly to the torrent; and thick jungle, starred at times by the eyes of fierce animals, conceals this wild amour; and there stands the hut of the hag, near which you descry a shed for cattle, which have been bought with the wages of her imposture. A knock is heard at her door; and starting instantly from the thin sleep of guilt, she opens it, after arousing her accomplices. Three men disguised, but not so deeply as to conceal from her experienced eye the features of lurid fear and ferocity, ask to be and are admitted. One, taller by the head and shoulders than the rest, opens in gloomy tones the gloomy interview, and asks her to bring up whom he should name. Not suspecting this to be Saul —and yet to whom else could belong that towering stature, that martial form, and the high yet hurried accents of that king-like misery—she reminds him that Saul had cut off all that had familiar spirits from the land, and that this might be a snare set for her life. Stung perhaps by this allusion to one of his few good deeds, in hot and hasty terms he swears to secure her safety. The woman, satisfied, asks whom she is to invoke, trusting probably to sleight-of-hand, on her part and her accomplices', to deceive the stranger. He cries aloud for Samuel—the once hated, the now greatly desired,

even in his shroud—and while he is yet speaking, his prayer is answered. Samuel, upraising himself through the ground, is seen by the woman. Horrified at the unexpected sight, and discovering the identity of Saul, she bursts into wild shrieks, "Thou art Saul!" Slowly shaping into distinct form, and curdling into prophetic costume, from the first vague and indefinite shade, appears an "old man covered with a mantle." The grave has yielded to the whisper of Omnipotence, and to the cry of despair. Fixing his eye upon the cowering and bending Saul, he asks the reason of this summons. Saul owns his extremity: and then the ghost, slowly disappearing, as he had slowly risen, seems to melt down into those awful accents, which fall upon Saul's ear as 'blood mingled with fire," and which leave him a mere molten residuum of their power upon the ground—"To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me," shadows in a world where the "light is as darkness." "Then fell Saul along the earth"—a giant chilled and prostrated by a vapor. And how similar the comfort offered through the Witch of Endor to the fallen monarch of Israel, to the dance of Macbeth's infernal comforters? Shakespeare must have had Endor in his eye:

> "Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprights,
> And show the best of our delights;
> I'll charm the air to give a sound,
> While you perform your antique round;
> That this great king may kindly say,
> Our duties did his welcome pay."

To this dance, performed to cheer the cheerless, we may liken the *calf*, killed in haste, and in haste eaten, by one who shall never partake of another meal. But here Macbeth rises above his prototype. He drinks the "wild-flower wine" of destiny, goes forth enlarged by the draught, and at last dies in broad battle, with his harness on his back; whereas Saul perishes on the morrow by his own hand.

And who was his chief mourner? Who sung his threnody —a threnody the noblest ever sung by poet over king? It was a laureate whom his death had elected to the office, it was David. His "Song of the Bow," which he taught to Israel till it became a household word of national sorrow, is one of the shortest as well as sweetest of lyrics. It is but one gasp of genius, and yet remains musical in the world's ear to this hour. It is difficult, by a single stroke upon the great heart of man, to produce a sound which shall reverberate till it min gle with the last trump; and yet this did David in Ziklag. On a wild torn leaf floating past him, he recorded his anguish; and that leaf, as if all the dew denied to the hills of Gilboa had rested on it, is still fresh with immortality. "How are the mighty fallen," "tell it not in Gath," "they were lovely in their lives, and in their death they were not divided," "thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women,"— these touches of nature, and accents of music, have come down to us entire, as if all the elements had conspired that such sounds should never perish. A lesson to all who write or speak! Speak from the *inmost heart*, and your word though as little, is as safe as Moses in his ark of bulrushes. Unseen hands are stretched forth from all sides to receive and to guard it. It becomes a part of the indestructible essence of things. The poet's name may perish; or, though it remain, may represent no intelligible character; but what he has uttered will be sung and wept over while the world endureth. Grasp, though it be with your finger, the horns of nature's altar, and you shall never be torn away. Let the world be ever so hurried in her transition from age to age, she never can forget to carry her least household gods along with her.

THE PROPHET OF REPROOF.

NATHAN.

III.

NATHAN.

Consulted about the Temple—David's Sin with Bathsheba—Murder of Uriah—Nathan's Apologue of the Ewe Lamb—"Thou art the Man"—David's Penitence—His Punishment—Death of His Child—Amnon and Tamar—Absalom Kills the Seducer of his Sister—Rebellion and Death of Absalom—Lament of David—Nathan the Tutor of Solomon—Jewish Literature—The Wisdom of Solomon—His Judicial Decisions—The Two Mothers—His Breadth of View—The Queen of Sheba—Solomon's Science—His "Song of Songs"—His Love of Nature—The Book of Proverbs.

NATHAN exercised his prophetic office during the reigns of David and Solomon. He first appears in the consultation with David concerning the building of the temple. The king, dwelling in a new and magnificent palace built by the Phenician craftsmen, was one day struck with compunction at the thought that the ark of God was so much more poorly lodged than himself. He was filled with the desire to prepare a fixed abode for it. Mentioning this notion to Nathan, he was encouraged to carry out his purpose. But that very night the word of the Lord came to the prophet with a message for David. It was declared that his intention was commendable and highly pleasing to God; and he was assured of the perpetuity of his dynasty as kings over Israel. Nevertheless the undertaking which he had in view, was reserved for the peaceful reign of his successor.

Nathan next comes forward as the reprover of David for his sin with Bathsheba. The particulars of this sad story, whereof lewdness, treachery and blood-guiltiness form the horrible characteristics, scarcely need to be recapitulated. Among the thirty chief commanders of David's army was the gallant Uriah, who had married Bathsheba, a woman of extraordinary beauty, the daughter of one of his brother offi

cers. He was passionately devoted to his wife, and their union was celebrated in Jerusalem as one of peculiar tenderness. Their house was underneath the palace, and the cisterns were built on the top of the lower houses of the city. The king, walking on the roof of his palace, saw this beautiful creature bathing, and conceived for her an uncontrollable passion, to which she seems to have offered no resistance. To cover his own shame, and save the reputation of the injured woman, he sent for Uriah from the camp, under pretense of asking news of the war, but in reality to fix the child that was to be born upon him. The king met with an unexpected obstacle in the austere soldier-like spirit of this sturdy chieftain. He steadily refused to go home, or partake of any of the indulgences of domestic life, whilst the ark and the host were in booths, and his comrades lying in the open air. He partook of the royal hospitality, but slept always in the guards' quarter at the gate of the palace. On the last night of his stay, the king at a feast vainly endeavored to entrap him by intoxication. The soldier was overcome by the debauch, but retained his sense of duty sufficiently to insist on sleeping at the palace. Then David sent him back to the camp with a letter containing a command to Joab to contrive his destruction in battle, and with minute directions how to secure this object. The brave and loyal soldier delivered this to his general, ignorant alike of his wife's dishonor, and of the treachery that was intended him.

In pursuance of his instructions, Joab observed the part of the besieged city where the strongest force of the enemy was congregated, and thither as a kind of forlorn hope he sent Uriah with a troop of soldiers. A sally took place, and the doomed man advancing to the gate of the city was shot down by the archers. It seems that it was an established maxim of Israelitish warfare not to approach the wall of a besieged city, and that this maxim was usually enforced by a reference to the historic case of the death of Abimilech at Thebez,

which cut short the hopes of the then rising monarchy. Just as Joab had forewarned the messenger, the king broke into a furious passion on hearing of the loss, and cited, almost in the words which Joab had predicted, the case of Abimilech.[1] The messenger, as instructed by Joab, calmly continued, ending the story with the words: "Thy servant also, Uriah, the Hittite, is dead." In a moment David quiets down. His anger is appeased. He sends a hypocritical and blasphemous message to Joab on the unavoidable chances of war, and urges him to continue the siege. Bathsheba hears of her

TOMB OF ABSALOM.

husband's death. The narrative gives no hint as to her shame or remorse. She "mourns" with the usual signs of grief as a widow, and then becomes the wife of David. And now all is covered. The dark deed is hushed up and forgotten, and the king can enjoy his prosperity, with no fear, no spectre of terror to disturb the comfort he has in the addition made to his harem by adultery and murder. The frightful combination of heinous crimes which, one after another, he had perpetrated, appears to have excited no remorse in the

1 See the Septuagint.

deadened condition of his conscience. The abundant peace and prosperity of his later years, with the unlimited power over others which his popularity and the ill-defined rights of sovereignty gave him, had engendered a taste for luxurious ease and sensual gratification, and lulled him into a spiritual slumber, from which the bolt of heaven, the direct intervention of Jehovah, will ere long awake him.

For the historian inserts at the end of his account of these transactions, one quiet sentence—terribly emphatic—

"BUT THE THING THAT DAVID HAD DONE DISPLEASED THE LORD."

Thus far the story belongs to the usual crimes of an Oriental despot. Detestable as was his double guilt, we must still remember that David was not a modern Christian ruler. He was an Eastern king, exposed to all the temptations of a king of Ammon or Damascus then, of a sultan of Bagdad or Constantinople in modern times. What follows, however could have been found nowhere in the ancient world but in the Jewish monarchy.

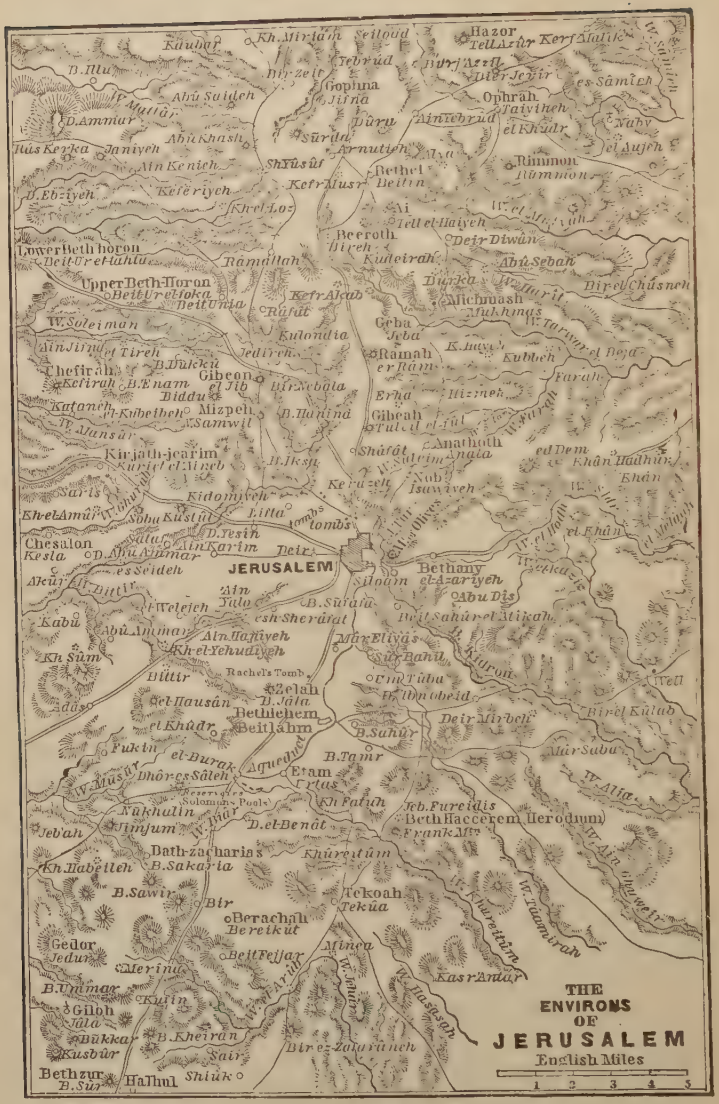
A year passes. The child of guilt is born in the royal house, and loved with all the passionate tenderness of David's paternal heart. Suddenly the prophet Nathan appears before him. He comes as if to claim redress for wrong in humble life. It was the true mission of the prophets, as champions of the oppressed, in the courts of kings. It was the true prophetic spirit that spoke through Nathan's mouth. The apologue of the rich man and the ewe lamb has, besides its own intrinsic tenderness, a supernatural elevation which is the best sign of true revelation. It ventures to disregard all particulars, and is content to aim at awakening the general sense of outraged justice. It fastens on the essential guilt of David's sin—not its sensuality, or its impurity, so much as its meanness and selfishness. It rouses the king's conscience by that teaching described as specially characteristic

of prophecy,[1] making manifest his own sin in the indignation which he has expressed at the sin of another. "There were," said Nathan "two men in one city; the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come unto him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die; and he shall restore the lamb four-fold because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man."

We have here the simplest of stories producing the most tremendous of heart-quakes. No four words in any language are simpler, and none stronger, than the words, "Thou art the man." What effect one quiet sentence can produce! The whispers of the gods, how strong and thrilling! Nathan, the gentle prophet, becomes surrounded with the grandeur of an apparition, and his words fall like the slow, heavy drops of a thunder-shower. The princely, gallant and gifted king quails before him.

Thou art the man is, or ought to be, the conclusion, expressed or unexpressed, of every practical sermon. A true description of a real incident, if like in its general character, however unlike to our own case in all the surrounding particulars, strikes home with greater force than the sternest personal invective. This is the mighty function of all great works of fiction. They have their power in that indirect

[1] 1st Cor. xiv. 24-25


Kaubal
Kh. Mirtâm
Seiloud
Hazor
Tell Ashûr
Kefr Malik
D. Illu
Birzeit
Tebnud
Tell Asûr
Tell Jevir
es Sâmieh
Gophna
Jifna
Ophrah
Taiyibeh
Abû Saideh
D. Ammar
Aintebnud
el Khudr
Nuby
Abû Khash
Sûrda
Dâru
Tûs Kerka
Janiyeh
Arnutiah
el Aujeh
Ain Kenieh
Shûsûr
Bethel
Rimmon
Rummon
D. Ebziyeh
Keferiyeh
Kefr Musr
Beitin
Khirbet Loz
Ai
Tell el Hajiyeh
Deir Diwân
Beeroth
Bireh
Lower Beth-horon
Beit Ûr el Tahta
Ramallah
Kuloniah
Abû Seban
Upper Beth-horon
Beit Ûr el Foka
Beit Unia
Kefr Akab
Rûfat
Michmash
Mukhmas
Dîr el Chûsneh
W. Suleiman
Geba
Jeba
Ain Jirful
el Tireh
Jedireh
Ramah
er Rûm
Kubieh
Chefirah
Kefirah
Beit Enam
Gibeon
el Jib
Bir Nebâla
Farah
Biddu
Katanch
el Kubeibeh
Mizpeh
Samwil
B. Hanina
Gibeah
Tuleil el Fûl
Nizmeh
Tr. Mansûr
Anathoth
Anata
Kirjath-jearim
Kuriet el Mineb
Shûfât
el Dem
Khân Hadhur
Ehân
Sar'is
Nob
Isawiyeh
Kidomiyeh
Khel Amâr
Sûba
Kustul
Jitta
tombs
Chesalon
Kesla
D. Abû Ammar
Ain Karim
Deir
el Hôd
el Mellâha
es Seideh
JERUSALEM
Bethany
el Azariyeh
Akûr
Ain
Yalo
el Welejeh
B. Sûrda
Abû Dis
Kabû
Abû Ammar
esh Sherâfat
Beit Sahûr el Atika
Ain Hanîyeh
Khel Yehudiyeh
Mâr Elyas
Kh. Sûm
Bittîr
Rachel's Tomb
Zelah
D. Jâla
Bethlehem
Beit Lahm
el Khudr
Deir Mirbeh
Birket Kulab
B. Sahûr
Fukîn
el Burak
B. Tamr
Aqueduct
Etam
Ain Atân
Kh. Fatûh
Kh. Fureidis
Beth Haccerem
Hierodium
Frank Mt.
Jebah
Dath-zacharias
Khûret Tûm
Kh. Habeiteh
B. Sakaria
B. Sawir
Bir
Tekoah
Tekûa
Berachah
Bereikût
Gedor
Jedur
Beit Fejjar
Minca
Kasr Antar
B. Ummar
Kutin
Jala
Bukka
Kusbur
B. Kheirân
Sair
Birez Zakaraneh
Bethzur
B. Sûr
Halhul
Shûk
THE ENVIRONS OF JERUSALEM
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1 2 3 4 5

appeal to the conscience of which the address of Nathan is the first and most exquisite example.

As the apologue of Nathan reveals the true prophet, so the Psalms of David reveal the true penitent. Two, at least, the 51st and 32d, can hardly belong to any other period. He has fallen. That abyss which yawns by the side of lofty genius and strong passion has opened and closed over him. The charm of his great name is broken. But the sudden revulsion of feeling shows that his conscience was not dead. Our reverence for David is shaken, not destroyed. The power of his former character was still there. It was overpowered for the time, but it was capable of being roused again. "The great waterfloods" had burst over him, but "they had not come nigh" to his inmost soul.[1] The prophet had by his opening words, "Give me a judgment,"[2] thrown him back upon his better nature. There was still an eye to see, and an ear to hear. His conscience approved the right and condemned the wrong. His indignation against the rich man of the parable showed that the moral sense was not wholly extinguished. The instant recognition of his guilt breaks up the illusion of months. The veil was torn from his eyes, and his heart died within him at the words, "*Thou* hast killed Uriah with the sword; thou hast taken his wife to be thy wife." "I have sinned against the Lord," he exclaims. The sense of his injustice to man waxes faint before his sense of sin against God. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." This is the peculiar turn given to his confession by the elevation and force of his religious convictions. He is worn away by grief; day and night he feels a mighty hand heavy upon him; his soul is parched up as with the drought of an Eastern summer. But he rises above the present by his passionate hopes for the future. His prayers are the simple expressions of one

1 Psalms xxxii. 6. 2 Vulgate.

who loathes sin because he has been acquainted with it; who longs to have truth in his innermost self, to have hands thoroughly clean, to make a fresh start in life with a spirit free, and just, and new. This is the true Hebrew, Christian idea of repentance: not penance, not remorse, not mere general confessions of human depravity, nor minute confessions of minute sins, dragged out by a too scrupulous casuistry, but change of mind and life. And in this, the crisis of his fate, and from the agonies of his grief, a doctrine emerges, as universal and as definite as was wrung out of the like strug gles of the Apostle Paul. Now, if ever, would have been the time, had his religion led him in that direction, to have expiated his crime by the sacrifices of the Levitical ritual But he remains true to the prophetic teaching. He knows that no substitution of dead victims, however costly, can fill up the gulf between himself and God. He knows that it is another and a higher sacrifice which God approves. "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it Thee; Thou delightest not in burnt-offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." And out of that broken and troubled heart, the dawn of a better life springs up. "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright of heart." He is not what he was before; but he is far nobler and greater than many a just man who never fell and never repented. He is far more closely bound up with the sympathies of mankind than if he had never fallen. We cannot wonder that a scruple should have arisen in recording so terrible a crime; and accordingly the Chronicler throws a veil over the whole transaction. But the bolder spirit of the more prophetic books of Samuel has been justified by the enduring results.

The whole matter is summed up by a critic not too indulgent to sacred characters: "Who is called the man after God's own heart? David, the Hebrew king, had fallen into sins enough—blackest crimes—there was no want of sin.

And therefore the unbelievers sneer, and ask: 'Is this your man according to God's heart?' The sneer, I must say, seems to me but a shallow one. What are faults, what are the outward details of a life, if the inner secret of it, the remorse, temptations, the often-baffled, never-ended struggle of it be forgotten? David's life and history, as written for us in those Psalms of his, I consider to be the truest emblem ever given us of a man's moral progress and warfare here below. All earnest souls will ever discern in it the faithful struggle of an earnest human soul toward what is good and best. Struggle often baffled, sore baffled, driven as into entire wreck; yet a struggle never ended; ever with tears, repentance, true, unconquerable purpose, begun anew."[1]

The sentence pronounced against David: "Behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house," furnishes the key to his future history and career, which was as unprosperous and troubled as the earlier part of his reign had been happy and successful. His own crimes, lewdness and blood-guiltiness, spread their foul contagion over his sons. There was in all things a great change; penitent and forgiven and clean of heart as he was, there was a great change in *himself*. Broken in spirit by the consciousness of how deeply he had sinned against God and against man; humbled in the eyes of his subjects, and his influence with them weakened by the knowledge of his crimes; and even his authority in his own household, and his claim to the reverence of his sons, relaxed by his loss of character—David appears henceforth as a much altered man. He is as one who goes down to the grave mourning. His active history is past; henceforth he is passive merely. Of the infirmities of his temper and character, there may have been previous indications, but they were dimly discernible through the splendor of his worthier qualities; now that splendor has waxed pale, the most fine gold has become dim, and the spots become

1 Carlyle.

broad and distinct. The balance of his character is broken. He is pious still, but even his piety takes an altered aspect. It is no longer buoyant, exulting, triumphant, glad; it is repressed, humble, patient, contrite, suffering. His trust in the Lord is strong, and still sustains him. But even it is different. Alas! for him. The bird which once rose to heights unattained before by mortal wing, filling the air with its joyful songs, now lies with maimed wing upon the ground, pouring forth its doleful cries to God.

Of the age of David at this time it may be said, that he

JERUSALEM.

had probably lived fifty-three years, and reigned twenty-three, when this base unrighteousness rent from his head the honor due to his gray hairs. The passionate grief of the king over the death of the child of shame is the first direct indication of that depth of parental affection which fills so large a part of David's subsequent story. His impenetrable seclusion during the illness of the child, the elder brothers gathering round to comfort him, the sudden revulsion of thought after the child's death, his confidence in another life, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me," are proofs that through all his lapses into savage cruelty and reckless

self-indulgence, there still remained a fountain of feeling within, as fresh and pure as when he fed his father's flocks and won the love of Jonathan.

The loss of his infant child was the beginning of the calamities that now marked his career. The clouds from this time gathered over David's fortunes, and henceforward, according to the word of Nathan, "the sword never departed from his house." His crime had sprung from the lawless and licentious life fostered by polygamy, which he had been the first to introduce; and out of this same polygamy sprang the terrible retribution.

Let us look at the internal relations of the royal family. The king's numerous concubines were placed together in his own house. Ten are mentioned at one point of the narrative, but these were only a part of the whole establishment. In early youth he had, like his countrymen generally, but one wife, the Princess Michal. But from his wanderings and from Hebron he brought six wives. To this number he added Bathsheba, and we do not know how many beside. These lived, as it would seem, with their children, each in separate establishments of their own.

The eldest of the princes was Amnon, the son of Ahinoam, whom the king cherished as the heir to the throne with a peculiar affection. His intimate friend in the family was his cousin Jonadab, one of those characters who in great houses pride themselves on being acquainted with all the secrets of the family. This was one group in the royal circle. Another consisted of the two children of Maacah, the princess of Geshur, Absalom and his sister Tamar, the only two of purely royal descent. In all of them the beauty for which the house of Jesse was renowned, seemed to be concentrated. Absalom, especially, was, in this respect, the very flower and pride of the whole nation. "In all Israel there was none to be praised for his beauty" like him. "From the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, there was no blemish in him." The

magnificence of his hair was something wonderful. Year by year, or month by month, its weight was counted and made known. He had a sheep-farm near Ephraim, or Ephron, a few miles to the north-east of Jerusalem, and another property near the Jordan valley, where he had erected a monument to keep alive the remembrance of his name, from the melancholy feeling that the three sons who should have preserved his race had died before him. He had, however, one daughter, named Tamar, after her aunt, and his grandchild was destined to play a conspicuous part in the history of the divided kingdom. The elder Tamar, like her brother and her niece, was remarkable for her extraordinary beauty, whence, perhaps, she derived her name, "the palm tree," the most graceful of Oriental trees. For this, and for the homely art of making a peculiar kind of cakes, the princess had acquired a renown which reached beyond the seclusion of her brother's house to all the circle of the royal family.

For his half sister Tamar, Amnon conceived a desperate passion, and long wasted away, "growing morning by morning paler and paler, leaner and leaner." At last he contrived, through the management of Jonadab, to accomplish his evil design. Then, his brutal hatred succeeding to his brutal passion, she found herself driven out of the house, and in a frenzy of grief and indignation, tearing off the sleeves from her royal robes, and with her bare arms clasping on her head the handfuls of ashes she had snatched from the ground, she rushed to and fro in the streets, screaming aloud, till she encountered her brother Absalom, and by him was taken into his own house.

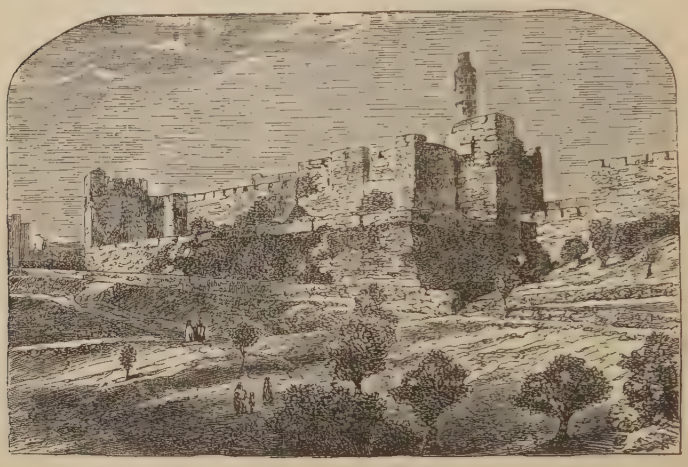
The king was afraid or unwilling to punish the crime of the heir to the throne. He was "very wroth," but he did nothing. He saw that he had begun to reap the harvest he had sown, and the evils threatened by the prophet were coming fast upon him. How could he who had sinned so deeply, call his son to account for his misconduct? But on Absalom,

as her brother, devolved, according to Eastern notions, the dreadful duty of avenging his sister's wrong. And he waited till he could strike the fatal blow with certainty. He intended to make his revenge effectual, and to use it for clearing his way to the throne. Amnon was the heir-apparent, and he meant to use his private wrong as the excuse for removing so serious an obstacle from his path. But to this end it was necessary that the king, as well as Amnon, should be lulled into the conviction that he had no thoughts of revenge. Two years passed before he felt it prudent to show any civility to Amnon; but then the occasion of holding a great sheep-shearing feast on his estate enabled him to realize his object. All the princes were invited by him to this pastoral festival at his country-house, and there "when Amnon's heart was merry with wine," his brother's servants set upon him and slew him. It would seem as if there was something desperate in Absalom's character, which made those around him feel that there was an immeasurable vista of vengeance opened. The other princes rushed to their mules, and galloped back to Jerusalem. The exaggerated news had already reached their father that all had perished. Jonadab reassured him. Still, the truth was dark enough; and Absalom retired into exile beyond the limits of Palestine, to his father-in-law's court at Geshur.

Brought back from exile by the diplomacy of Joab, Absalom began to prepare his way to the throne. He was virtually chief of the king's sons. That strength and violence of will which made him terrible among his brethren was now to vent itself against his father. He courted popularity by constantly appearing in the royal seat of judgment, in the gateway of Jerusalem. He affected royal state by the unusual display of chariots and war-horses, and runners to precede him. At length he openly raised the standard of revolt. The king fled from Jerusalem. His court and guards accompanied him. As they passed over the deep ravine of

the Kidron, a wail of grief rose from the whole procession, which seemed to be echoed back by mountain and valley, as if "the whole land wept with a loud voice." Another burst of wild lament broke out as the procession turned up the mountain pathway; the king leading the long dirge, which was taken up all down the slope of Olivet.

We miss now the daring courage which formerly distinguished David. His one great two-fold sin has broken the



CASTLE OF DAVID.

arm of his moral strength. That sin separates the two periods of his life by a line as distinct and broad as that between summer and winter. He holds the reins of government now with a relaxed and hesitating grasp. There is a meek submission to everything that befalls him, as if he saw in all another hand than that of Ahithophel or Absalom, and were conscious that he deserved the worst at the hand of God, though not from them. When he had passed over the mountain top, and entered the territory of Benjamin, he encountered Shimei, the son of Gera, of the fallen dynasty of Saul. A deep ravine parted the king's march from the house of the

furious Benjamite. But along the ridge he ran, throwing stones as if for the adulterer's punishment, or when he came to a patch of dust on the dry hill-side, taking it and scattering it over the royal party below, with the elaborate curses of which only Eastern partisans are fully masters. David bade his companions remember that after the desertion of his favorite son anything was tolerable: "Behold my son which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life; how much more now may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him."

Three months seem to have elapsed before a battle took place. David wished to head his troops, but they dissuaded him from exposing his royal person. Perhaps also they had their secret fears that his tenderness for Absalom might embarrass them on the battle-field. It is touching to hear the old king, as his soldiers march past him, speaking a kind and pleading word for his graceless son to the stern and resolute leaders: "Deal gently with the young man Absalom for my sake."

The battle was fought in the wooded district of Ephraim, and the first stern onslaught of David's men seems to have thrown Absalom's vast army into universal confusion and rout. They fled panic-stricken into the neighboring woods and thickets, only to become there the more easy prey to their pursuers. As the wretched Absalom, now deserted by all, hurried in terror and flight through some part of the forest, he came suddenly upon a detachment of David's army. Darting aside through the wood, his long and beautiful hair, which had been his pride, became entangled among the branches of a terebinth or prickly oak—he was swept off his mule, and hung suspended between heaven and earth. What a terrible position! Full of life, and yet hanging helpless in the momentary dread of death! And what a change in one brief hour! For one hour ago, myriads were at his command, and a crown shone dazzling almost within

his grasp. And now behold this vain youth in this mingled plight of helplessness and shame, "with none so poor to do him reverence." None of the ordinary soldiers ventured to attack him. At length Joab is guided to the place, and thinking less of David's restrictions as a father, than of his paramount interests as a king, and of the safety and unity of his kingdom, he becomes with his own hand the executioner of the beautiful but worthless parricide and rebel. He and his ten attendants formed a circle round the gigantic tree, enclosing its precious victim, and first by his three pikes, then by their swords, accomplished the bloody work.

Hard by was a well-known ditch or pit of vast dimensions. Into this the corpse was thrown, and covered by a huge mound of stones. Mussulmen legends represent hell as yawning at the moment of his death beneath the feet of the unhappy prince. The modern Jews as they pass the monument in the valley of the Kidron, to which they have given his name, have buried its sides deep in the stones which they throw against it in execration.

"Shame and dishonor sit
By his grave ever;
Blessings shall hallow it—
Never, O never!"

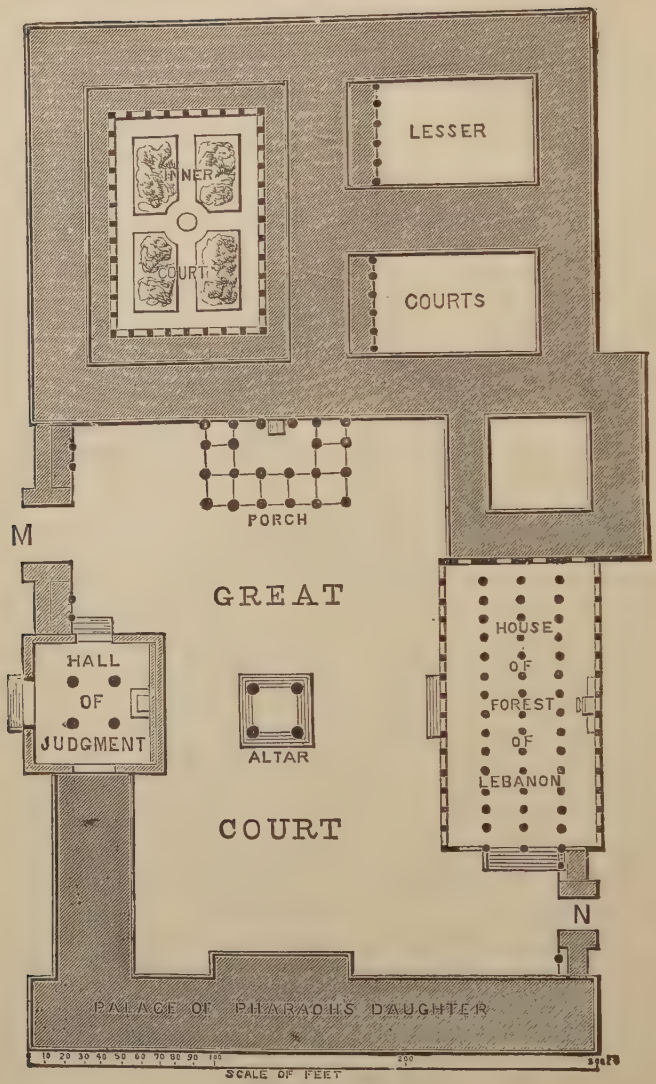
David sits waiting for tidings in the little chamber between the outer and inner gate of Mahanaim. Upon his receiving the fatal news, there follows that passionate burst of grief which is one of the best proofs of the deep and genuine affection of David's character. Ascending to the watchman's chamber over the gateway, he repeats again and again, in his intervals of sobs and tears, those words of parental anguish: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" All the past wickedness of his graceless child, his murder of Amnon, his conspiracies, his treason, his attempts

to dethrone him, the fact that at the moment when he perished he had been seeking his father's life, were forgotten or forgiven in the first irrepressible outburst of that strong love which "many waters could not quench, or many floods drown."

Eight times over was the wail of grief repeated. It was the belief of the more merciful of the Jewish doctors, that at each cry, one of the seven gates of hell rolled back, and that with the eighth, the lost spirit of Absalom was received into Paradise.

The touching words of the anguished king, by a natural law of suggestion, make our hearts, for a brief moment, glance gratefully upward, and exclaim in the words of good Bishop Hall, "But what then shall we say to that love of Thine, O Saviour, who hast said to us wretched traitors, not 'Would God I had died for you,' but I will die, I do die, I have died for you! O love like Thyself infinite, incomprehensible, whereat the angels of heaven stand yet amazed, wherewith Thy saints are ravished! Turn away Thine eyes from me, for they overcome me."

Nathan appears from time to time in the narrative. He seems to have been the life-long friend and counselor of David. It is surmised that their acquaintance began in Samuel's school of the prophets in Naioth. On the birth of Solomon, Nathan was either specially charged with giving him his name, Jedidiah, or else with his education. He was the adviser of Bathsheba in maintaining Solomon's right to the throne, and appeared opportunely in the presence of David to confirm her statements in respect to the usurpation of Adonijah. By David's request he took part in the inauguration of Solomon. Thus while he had fearlessly reproved the sin of the king and Bathsheba, he was honored and trusted by both of them, and sought to advance the interests of their son, and doubtless, as his preceptor and counselor, had more influence over him than any other person. Solomon's proverbs or parables are to a great extent a continua-



SOLOMON'S PALACE.

tion of the style introduced by Nathan in the apologue of the ewe lamb.

Nathan left two works behind him, a Life of David, and a Life of Solomon. The last of these may have been incomplete, as we cannot be sure that he outlived Solomon. But the biography of David by Nathan is, perhaps, the most deplorable of all the losses which antiquity, sacred or profane, has sustained. His grave is shown near Hebron.

The name Jedidiah, given to Solomon by Nathan, means the "darling of the Lord." He was placed under the care of the prophet from his earliest infancy. His reign has sometimes been called the Augustan age of the Jewish nation. But there was this peculiarity, that Solomon was not only its Augustus, but its Aristotle. Fabulous as is the Rabbinical tradition, it yet brings the Greek sage and the Hebrew monarch together in a way that is suggestive, in the statement that when Alexander took Jerusalem, he captured the works of Solomon, and sent them to Aristotle, who thence derived all that was good in his philosophy.

Jewish literature had already begun to unfold itself in a systematic form at the beginning of the monarchy. Music and poetry were specially developed and concentered in the prophetic schools of Samuel; and to the earlier warlike bursts of the poetic spirit of the nation had now been added David, the founder of the Sacred Poetry of Judea and of the world. Besides the Pentateuch, the earlier historical books of the Canon had been written, and we have notices of lost works of Samuel, Gad and Nathan.

But with the accession of Solomon a new world of thought was opened to the Israelites. A new power appears, called by the name of "wisdom." A class of men sprang up, distinct both from priest and prophet, under the name of "the wise." Their teaching, their manner of life, was unlike that of either of those two powerful orders. The thing and the name had been almost unknown before. What it was may

best be perceived by seeing it in its greatest representative His wisdom excelled the "wisdom" of any one of his time From his early years its germs had been recognized. It may be that there was something hereditary in the gift. "Prudence" was one of the conspicuous qualities of his father, and of his two cousins, the sons of Shimeah. The almost supernatural sagacity of Ahithophel may have been in his mother's family, and Bathsheba herself must have been worthy of her husband and her son. David charges him: "Do according to thy wisdom," "Thou art a wise man and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him." The attainment of wisdom is frequently urged upon him by his father: "Get wisdom, get understanding; wisdom is the principal thing; get wisdom; with all thy getting, get understanding. She shall be to thy head an ornament of praise; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee."

DATE-PALM.

The first characteristic of this wisdom was carefully de

fined by Solomon himself, in the dream at Gibeon: "An understanding heart, to *judge* the people, to discern *judgment*." This was the original meaning of the word. It was the calm, judicial discretion, which was intended to supersede the passionate, chivalrous, irregular impulses which had formerly prevailed. The administration of justice was in all ancient monarchies, as it is now in the East, a most important part of the royal duties and functions; and there is no quality more highly prized than that keen discernment in the royal judge, which detects the clue of real evidence amidst conflicting testimony, or that ready tact which devises a test of truth where the evidence affords not even the clue to any grounds of decision. This quality comes more home to the personal concerns of the subjects than any other, and Solomon's sagacity in the administration of justice was calculated to make the most marked impression upon the popular mind, and to be most generally talked about through the land.

The first example was the keen-sighted appeal to the instincts of nature, in the judgment between the two mothers. The story is well known. One of the mothers having lost her son, they contend for the possession of the living child. The king detects the real mother by the emotion she shows when he orders the child to be divided, and half given to each; and by her readiness to abandon her claim rather than see the child perish before her eyes. The despotism of that age, and the advance in civilization since, are strongly shown by the fact that the woman really believed that this order would be executed. Were a judge now to make such a suggestion, the most ignorant woman in the land would know that he could not execute it.

But Solomon used the absolute power he possessed, and the wisdom which God had conferred upon him, to secure substantial justice for those who needed it. "The poor," "the needy," "the oppressed," "the needy," "the poor," "the helpless," "the poor," "the needy," "the sufferers from violence and

deceit," are mentioned with pathetic reiteration as under his especial protection; "judged," "saved," "delivered," "spared," "redeemed," by him—their blood precious in his his sight. "The king, by *judgment*, establisheth the land." "The throne of the king shall be established in justice." "The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established forever." "All Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged, and they feared the king, for they saw that the *wisdom* of God was in him to do *judgment*."

And not only in his own age, but long afterward, did the recollection of that serene reign keep alive the idea of a just king before the eyes of the people, and enable them to understand how there should once again appear at the close of their history, a still greater Son of David. When the prophet[1] announces that this new Prince of the house of Jesse is to be endowed with "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord," the special manifestation of this spirit is that "He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears. But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; . . . . . and righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins."

How far beyond the age was this distinct recognition of the paramount importance of justice! And closely allied with it is another characteristic of the wisdom of Solomon, his "largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore." This breadth of view is one of the aspects which "wisdom" assumes in the only case where it is expressly named in the reign of David. When Joab invoked the aid of the "wise" woman of Tekoah, to reconcile David to his son, her whole argument is based on the grandeur of the large and comprehensive grasp with which a king should

[1] Isaiah xi. 1–5.

treat the complex difficulties of human character. She speaks of the irreparable death which is the universal lot of all men, "as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." She appeals to the universal sympathy of God for His lost creatures; "He doth devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him." She appeals to the superhuman "wisdom" of David, as able to hear and bear with good and evil; and "to know"—not this or that form of temper only, but "all things that are in the earth." That dialogue contains the germ of Solomon's greatness. The large and comprehensive spirit of which it speaks, belonged pre-eminently to him. His "wisdom" was akin to the moral elevation of sentiment found in the prophets. Founder of the temple, he never allowed its external magnificence to outweigh his sense of the spiritual character of the Divinity, or of the moral obligations of man. He cannot be charged with superstition or undue submission to the sacerdotal order. "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." This maxim of the Proverbs[1] was a bold saying then; it is a bold saying still; but it well unites the wisdom of Solomon with that of his father David in the 51st Psalm, and with the inspiration of the later prophets.

GAZELLE.

One character, attracted to Jerusalem by the fame of Solomon, finds a place not only in the Old Testament, but also in the New. "The Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon." Of this visit of the Queen of Sheba,

1 Prov. xxi. 3.

many traditions remain. According to those current among the Arabians, the princess sent ambassadors to Solomon before she went herself. With them she sent five hundred boys dressed like girls, and the same number of girls dressed like boys; nosegays of artificial flowers to be distinguished from real ones by the sight alone; a closed casket, containing a pearl, a diamond intricately pierced, and a goblet of crystal. They carried a letter referring to these things: "As a true prophet, thou wilt no doubt be able to distinguish the youths from the maidens; to divide the contents of the enclosed casket; to perforate the pearl; to thread the diamond; and to fill the goblet with water that hath not dropped from the clouds, nor gushed forth from the earth."

When they reached Jerusalem, Solomon told them the contents of the letter before they presented it, and made light of their mighty problems. He detected the boys and girls by their different manner of washing, and discovered the difference in the nosegays by letting the bees in upon them. A huge slave was set to gallop to and fro on a fiery horse; and from the torrents of its perspiration the goblet was filled. The pearl he pierced by a stone known to him. The threading of the diamond puzzled him for a moment, but at length he inserted a small worm, which wound its way through the intricate perforations, leaving a silken thread behind it, and then as its reward received the mulberry tree for its future habitation. He then dismissed the ambassadors, refusing to accept the presents they had brought—a thousand carpets, wrought with gold and silver, a crown composed of the finest pearls and hyacinths, and many loads of musk, amber and aloes, and other precious products of South Arabia.

The queen now determined to visit Jerusalem in person. When she came, Solomon, who had heard a piece of scandal about her, viz.: that she had cloven feet, first of all demonstrated his sagacity by the mode in which he tested this report. He caused her to be conducted over a crystal floor,

below which was real water, with fish swimming about. She had never seen a crystal floor, and supposed there was water to be passed through, and gathered up her robe, enabling the king to satisfy himself that she had a very neat foot, not at all cloven. He afterward married her, and although she returned to Arabia, he spent three months of every year in her company.

Of the science of Solomon the sacred writers tell enough to show us that, in pursuing this great study, we are his true followers; that the geologist, the astronomer, but especially the botanist and the naturalist, may claim him as their first professor. "He spake of trees, from the spreading cedar tree of Lebanon to the slender caper plant that springs out of the crevice of the wall. He spake also of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes." We must look at him as the first great naturalist of the world, in the midst of the strange animals, the apes and peacocks, which he had collected from India; in the garden, among the copious springs of Etham, or in the bed of the deep ravine, beneath the wall of the newly-erected temple; the "paradise" of rare plants, gathered from far and near "pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spike nard, spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices."

These gardens and parks, "and trees of all kinds of fruit, and reservoirs of water to water the trees," Solomon was the first to establish, and his successors on the northern throne of Israel kept them up at Samaria and Jezreel. To one of these, at early dawn, according to the Jewish tradition, he would drive out from Jerusalem in one of his numerous chariots, drawn by horses of unparalleled swiftness and beauty, himself clothed in white, followed by a train of mounted archers, all splendid youths of magnificent stature, dressed in purple, their long black hair flowing behind them, powdered

with gold dust, which glittered in the sun, as they galloped along after their master.

The Arabian traditions contain numerous fables of his intercourse with birds, with whom "he conversed, both on account of their delicious language, which he knew as well as his own, as also for the beautiful proverbs which are current among them." The lapwing was his special favorite. The cock and the hoopoe were his constant attendants. Clouds of birds formed the canopy of his throne and of his litter. The doves multiplied so rapidly from the stroke of his hand that he could walk to the temple from the market quarter of the city under cover of their wings.

Both the Jew and the Arab represent Solomon's science to have extended beyond the limits of the natural world into the regions of magic and demoniacal agency. According to Arabian legends, he ruled the genii with an absolute sway with his signet-ring. At his command they built the temple and the walls of Tadmor and Baalbec. On their wings he rode to and fro, breakfasting at Persepolis, dining at Baalbec, supping at Jerusalem. But the sacred writings contain no allusion to these occult powers. Here again, by contrast with the fanciful traditions of the East, they attest their own Divine origin.

RINGS.

The "Song of songs" is the most direct sanction which the inspired oracles contain of the dramatic element. Of this drama the stage and scenery are formed by the gardens, the luxury, the splendor of Solomon. Nowhere else is the fragrance of spring, the beauty of flowers, the variety of animal life, brought out in a manner more worthy of the great king who entered so keenly into all these things. "The winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give

a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." We feel as we read that this is our own feeling. It is more than Oriental—it is the simple, genuine sentiment of delight in nature. Whatever else we may learn from the Song of Solomon, we may at least learn the same fresh and homely lesson that has been impressed upon the Christian world by the new turn which Wordsworth has given to poetic feeling.

The book of Proverbs is not on a level with the Prophets or the Psalms. It approaches human things and things Divine from quite another side. It has even something of a worldly, prudential look, unlike the rest of the Bible. But this is the very reason why its recognition as a sacred book is so useful. It is the philosophy of practical life. It is the sign to us that the Bible does not despise common sense and discretion. It impresses upon us, in the most forcible manner, the value of intelligence and prudence, and of a good education. The whole strength of the Hebrew language, and of the sacred authority of the book, is thrown upon these homely truths. It deals, too, in that refined, discriminating, careful view of the finer shades of human character, so often overlooked by theologians, but so necessary to any true estimate of human life. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and the stranger does not intermeddle with its joy." How much is there, in that single sentence, of consolation of love, of forethought! And above all, it insists over and over again, upon the doctrine, that goodness is "wisdom," and that wickedness and vice are "folly." There may be many other views of virtue and vice, of holiness and sin, higher and better than this. But there will always be some in the world who will need to remember that a good man is not only religious and just, but wise; and that a bad man is not only wicked and sinful, but a miserable, contemptible fool.

"ALL IS VANITY, SAITH THE PREACHER."

"Fame, wisdom, love and power were mine,
And health and youth possessed me·
My goblets blushed from every vine,
And lovely forms caressed me;
I sunned my heart in beauty's eyes,
And felt my soul grow tender;
All earth can give, or mortal prize,
Was mine of regal splendor.

"I strive to number o'er what days
Remembrance can discover,
Which all that life or earth displays
Would lure me to live over;
There rose no day, there roll'd no hour
Of pleasure unimbitter'd,
And not a trapping deck'd my power
That gall'd not while it glitter'd.

"The serpent of the field, by art
And spells, is won from harming;
But that which coils around the heart,
Oh, who hath power of charming?
It will not list to wisdom's lore,
Nor music's voice can lure it;
But there it stings for evermore
The soul that must endure it."

HEBREW MELODIES.

THE PROPHET OF FIRE.

THE CHARIOT OF FIRE.

IV.

ELIJAH.

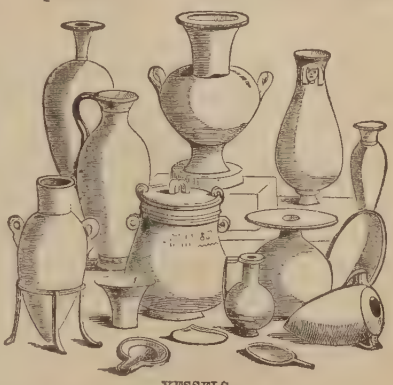
Stands before Ahab—His Personal Appearance—The Drought—The Brook Cherith—Raises the Widow's Son—Zarephath—Famine—Obadiah—Meeting on Carmel—The Test by Fire—Elijah's Irony—Prayer for Rain—Ahab makes his Report to his Queen—Flight of Elijah—His Despondency—Vision of Horeb—The Still Small Voice—He throws his Mantle over a Young Farmer—Elisha's Humility—The Parting Feast—Naboth's Vineyard—The Curse on Ahab—Jezebel—Death of Ahab—Fire from Heaven destroys the Armed Bands—Ascension of Elijah—Parallel with Moses—"Alone"—The Impression made by him on his Nation—The Mount of Transfiguration.

THE Hebrew prophet, in his most striking form, was a solitary and savage man, residing with lions, when he was not waylaying kings; on whose brow the scorching sun of Syria had charactered its fierce and swarthy hue; and whose dark eye swam with a fine insanity, gathered from solitary communings with the sand, the sea, the mountains and the sky, while it glowed with the light of a Divine afflatus. He had lain in the cockatrice's den; he had put his hand on the hole of the asp; he had spent the night on lion-surrounded trees, and slept and dreamed amid their hungry roar; he had swam in the Dead Sea, or haunted like a ghost those dreary caves which lowered around it; he had drank of the melted snow on the top of Lebanon; at Sinai he had traced and trod on the burning footprints of Jehovah; he had heard messages at midnight which made his hair to arise and his skin to creep; he had been wet with the dews of the night, and girt by the demons of the wilderness; he had been tossed up and down like a leaf upon the strong and veering storm of his inspiration. He was essentially a lonely man, cut off by

gulf upon gulf from tender ties and human associations. He had no home; a wife he might be permitted to marry, but as in the case of Hosea, the permission might be to him only a curse, and to his people an emblem; and when, as with Ezekiel, her death became necessary as a sign, she died and left him in the same austere seclusion as before. The power which came upon him cut, by its fierce coming, all the threads which bound him to his kind, tore him from the plow, or from the pastoral solitude, and hurried him to the desert, and thence to the foot of the throne, or to the wheel of the triumphal chariot. And how startling his coming to crowned or conquering guilt! Wild from the wilderness, bearded like its lion-lord; the anger of God against sin glaring in his eye; his mantle heaving to his heaving breast, his words stern, swelling, tinged on their edges with a terrible poetry; his attitude dignity; his gesture power—how did he burst upon the astonished gaze; how swift and solemn his entrance; how short and spirit-like his stay; how dreamy, yet distinctly dreadful, the impression made by his words long after they had ceased to tingle on the ears; and how mysterious the solitude into which he seemed to melt away! Poet, nay prophet, were a feeble name for such a being—a meteor kindled at the eye, and blown on the breath of the Eternal.

To much of this description all the prophets answer, but it finds its fullest embodiment in Elijah, whom God testified to be the greatest of the family, by raising him to heaven. Sudden as a vision of the night, he stands up before Ahab, the evil king of Israel, and the historian no more thinks of recounting his ancestry, than he would of tracing that of a dream. "Elijah the Tishbite of the inhabitants of Gilead," is literally all that is given us to know of his parentage and locality. At the time of his appearance clouds and thick darkness covered the whole land; the images of Baalim and Ashtaroth gleamed fearfully everywhere; idolatrous temples and heathen altars occupied the sacred soil; every hill

smoked with their sacrifices, every vale resounded with the blasphemous yells of cruel priestcraft. And now while darkness reigns, darkness which can be felt, while no cheering star gleams through this universal darkness, on a sudden the history changes with the words: "AND ELIJAH SAID." The man seems as if dropped from heaven into the midst of this awful night-piece. Of his appearance as he "stood before" Ahab with the suddenness of motion to this day characteristic of the Bedouin from his native hills, we can perhaps realize something from the touches, few but strong, of the narrative. Of his height little is to be inferred; that little is in favor of its being beyond the ordinary size. His chief characteristic was his hair, long and thick, and hanging down his back; which if not betokening the immense strength of Samson, yet accompanied powers of endurance no less remarkable. His ordinary clothing consisted of a girdle of skin round his loins, which he tightened when about to move quickly. But in addition to this he occasionally wore the "mantle," or cape, of sheep-skin, which has supplied us with one of our most familiar figures of speech. In this mantle, in moments of emotion, he would hide his face, or when excited would roll it up as into a kind of staff. On one occasion we find him bending himself down upon the ground with his face between his knees. The solitary life in which these external peculiarities had been assumed had also nurtured that fierceness of zeal and that directness of address which so distinguished him. It was in the wild loneliness of the hills and ravines of Gilead that the knowledge of Je-



VESSELS.

hovah, the living God of Israel, was impressed on his mind, and this was to form the subject of his mission to the idolatrous court and country of Israel.

The northern kingdom at this time had almost entirely forsaken the faith in Jehovah. Ever since the death of Solomon, the accession of Rehoboam to the throne, and the revolt of the ten tribes under Jeroboam, the evil of idolatry had been coming in like a flood. The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained subject to the house of David, with the seat of government at Jerusalem. The kingdom of Israel comprised all the northern districts, and its royal residence was first the fortified hill of Thirza, and afterward the city of Samaria. Jeroboam began his reign by introducing, from political motives, a new idolatry. He was apprehensive that if the people continued in connection with the Temple and the worship of God at Jerusalem, they would gradually fall away from him and return to their allegiance to the house of David. He therefore made an imitation of the golden cherubim of the temple, transferred some of the festivals to other seasons, and chose priests out of all the tribes of the people, without restriction to the tribe of Levi. This worship was a departure from the Lord, a violation of His command against material resemblances; but still it would appear that even in the presence of the calves Jehovah was acknowledged, and they were at any rate a national institution, not one imported from the idolatries of any of the surrounding countries. But the case was different when Ahab introduced the foreign religion of his wife's family, the worship of the Phenician Baal. Gloomy idol temples rose in every direction; profane altars, stained with the blood of prophets and other holy men, bade defiance to the Most High.

Against these evils Elijah comes forward as a witness. He suddenly appears before Ahab, as with the unrestrained freedom of Eastern manners he would have no difficulty in doing, and proclaims the vengeance of Jehovah for the apos-

tasy of the king. "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." Thus boldly he undertook to shut and to open heaven. The whole country of Samaria seemed to shake her head at him, and to laugh at his prediction. The luxuriant pastures and the well-watered fields seemed to exclaim together, "This judgment shall not be executed!" and a thousand springs and brooks flowing through the land, and the vapory hills which form and attract the clouds, all seemed to join together to falsify his word. But that word was spoken by Divine authority, and accompanied by Divine power, and neither springs, nor brooks, nor clouds, nor the richest luxuriance of vegetation could avail aught against it. Immediately the heavens became brass over the head, and the earth iron under the feet. The word of the prophet struck like a fever into the heart of the earth, withering and scorching it. All that was fresh and green faded and hung its head. Every stream and rivulet dried up, and all that had breath lay gasping and languishing on the ground. Neither dew nor rain fell during three years and six months. Such were the effects produced by the voice of a man, but a man who was in communion and accord with the Almighty. The rays of the sun which before had diffused a smile over the whole face of nature, were now changed into arrows of destruction and death; while the sultry winds with their burning lips licked up every rivulet from its bed and every fountain from its source. The plants and trees dropped their leaves and withered away; the lowing herds and bleating flocks explored every spot in the parched fields; the wild beasts moaned in the forests; the dearth rose to its height, and it was not long till the famine became universal, and turned every habitation into a place of mourning and woe.

THE BROOK CHERITH.

Meanwhile Elijah is a sufferer with the rest, exposed to the wrath he had drawn down, in danger of famine and death,

threatened with the vengeance of the court, execrated by the whole nation, and devoted to ruin by the infuriated populace. He is directed to the brook Cherith. Let us visit the prophet in his new dwelling-place. A dreary wild, near the banks of the Jordan, is the scene that opens before us. Dead silence reigns around, save when broken by the cry of the solitary bittern; while amongst the heath and the juniper bushes broods the ostrich, no hunter disturbing its repose. No pathway opens to the view, not a human footstep is seen; all is wilderness and solitude. But our course lies yonder, where the naked rocks rear their lofty heads, and the forests frown. Through one thicket and another, and by narrow passes, we come at length to a deep and narrow glen, overhung with tangled wood, where a brook runs murmuring, along, and finds its way between the rocky masses. There, in the hollow of the torrent-bed sits the man of God! This is his appointed dwelling; the blue sky his roof, the bare rocks his walls, the stone his seat, the shady wood his bed-chamber, the grass his couch; his company the purling brook and the ravens aloft among the trees. Here for twelve months he dwells; and solitude does not become wearisome, nor the hissing of serpents or the distant roar of the lion inject terror into his soul, for he remembers, "I am here for the Lord's sake, His footsteps are among these rocks, and around me are the evidences of His power." He needs neither books nor society, neither labor nor diversion to entertain him. Silent nature is a sufficient book—the treasure of his own experience an ample volume. He hears the gentlest whispers of the Lord more readily than amid the noise of the busy world. The works of creation are a living epistle to him. The rock preaches of the Rock that ever lives, on which his own feet are planted. The brook has many sweet things to say of the truth and faithfulness of God; it tells of other waters still to come—waters to be poured out upon the thirsty, floods upon the dry ground, springs that are to break forth in the desert; it

points to the pure river of the water of life, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb, which another seer, in a coming age, is to behold and paint in his glowing apocalyptic vision. At one time the shady trees speak to him of the comforts of the tree of life, and of those heavenly palms from whose tops eternal peace will at length breathe upon him. At another, the cheerful songsters of the air, and the wild roses in the brakes sing to him, "He who cares for us in this wilderness, feeding the one and giving fragrance and beauty to the other, cannot forget thee." In short, everything begins to live and breathe and talk around him—the stars in the firmament, the drops on the leaves, the zephyrs among the shrubs, the flowers in the little nooks by the brook-side.

But now the brook begins to dry up, it becomes a mere trickling rivulet, and at last fails utterly. In vain the ravens continue to supply him with food. No sooner does the morning dawn in Cherith's rocky vale than their cry is heard aloft in the trees; and when Elijah wakes, he beholds the provision for the day lying before him. And when the evening shades advance, these liveried servants again appear, laden with meat and bread. But he cannot live without water, and death by thirst seems imminent. A refuge is provided for him at Zarephath, a Phenician town lying between Tyre and Sidon. To reach this, Elijah must make a long and toilsome journey, through a wild and barren country, in a time of general famine and extreme drought; and find an asylum at last among a heathen people enslaved to a vile idolatry, the native country of Jezebel, his bitterest enemy, and the territory of her father, a furious tyrant and the ally of Ahab. Certainly this must try the courage and faith of Elijah, the

AMON.

enemy of Baal. However, the widow woman, to whose house he was directed, seems to have been an Israelite, and no Baal-worshiper. Arrived in the neighborhood of Zarephath, he finds the way prepared for his reception. He comes near the gate of the city, and lo, the widow woman is there gathering sticks for fuel. The Spirit, perhaps, intimates to him that this is the woman to whom he is directed. Poor as she appears to be from the occupation in which she is now engaged, he knows if the Lord has appointed her to sustain him, she will have wherewith to do it. He speaks to her: "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." Her readiness to go encourages him, for as she is going to fetch it, he adds: "Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand." This opens afresh the wounds of the poor widow's heart. She answers: "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not even the smallest loaf of bread; only a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; and behold I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not: go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first and bring it unto me, and after, make for thee and thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah; and she and he and her house did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which He spake by Elijah." This beautiful narrative has lost none of its savor by the lapse of time. Its interest is fresh and inexhaustible. One wonders whether to admire most the faith of Elijah or of the woman. But it is perhaps worth while to remark that no premium is here put upon indolence or the enthusiasm that looks to God for bread without the use of means. The miraculous feeding of the prophet and

RAISING THE WIDOW'S SON.

his friends is not intended to encourage us in the expectation that God will supply our wants without the proper exercise of our faculties in the callings in which He has placed us.

The Lord did not give this poor widow a whole vat of oil and barn full of grain or ware-house of flour all at once, sufficient to carry her through all the years of famine. But He so ordered that whenever she came to the barrel she still found a handful of meal in the bottom, and He kept a little oil still in the cruse. The simple elements of her housekeeping were never exhausted. The supply was always equal to the necessities of the hour. And so will it be with those who trust in the Lord, both as to their temporal and spiritual wants. They will find the promise verified: "As thy day so shall thy strength be;" "My grace is sufficient for thee." Thousands daily experience the faithfulness of God, substantially as it was exemplified at Zarephath, though not in the same form or manner.

RAISES THE WIDOW'S SON.

Unexpectedly, in the midst of cheering blessings, a heavy cloud darkened the peaceful cottage. The widow's son, her only child, doubly dear to her in consequence of his wonderful preservation from imminent death by famine, "fell sick." The sickness increased every hour, and the distress of the poor mother was extreme; but her tears prevailed not. Her delight and hope, the dearest object she had on earth, lay extended in the arms of death. Behold her bowed down with grief and misery, and sitting with her dead child strained to her bosom, as if she would again warm his stiffened limbs at her throbbing heart. The prophet is touched with heartfelt compassion and sympathy. "And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. And he cried unto the Lord and said: O Lord, my God, hast Thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom

I sojourn by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord my God I pray Thee let this child's soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother, and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth." He who by prayer shut the heaven from rain, by prayer also opened it for life to the widow's son. This is the first miracle of the kind on record. It belonged to him who was to stand with Moses and with Christ upon Tabor, to be the first who should be the means of restoring the dead to life.

HEATHEN ALTARS.

ZAREPHATH.

Two years were spent by the prophet in this retreat. And the hills and vales where he prayed and meditated must ever be of interest to the Christian. Zarephath, called Sarepta in the New Testament, is the modern Zarapha. It is situated on a hill-side, some two miles from the sea, amid a scene of wild beauty. Although called "a city," it was most probably always a place of moderate size, the simplicity of whose manners and tastes was uncorrupted by the neighborhood of Tyre and Sidon. Its dwellings and its people are homely and pastoral. No ruin of roofless walls, or old gateway covered with grass and wild flowers, is shown as the remnant of the widow's cottage. Tradition has given up its identity in despair, while preserving the identity of the village. The distant groves of Sidon, the fine summits of Lebanon, the wilder hills behind its own wild hill, are all visible from Zarapha. There is no chapel in the village. It is destitute of religious service throughout the year, as if the numerous

monasteries of Lebanon could not spare one priest out of their hives to dwell here, or to gather its villagers on the Sabbath. The "cold-flowing waters from the rock in the field" may be the same which supplied the wants of the widow and the prophet. Each of the cottages has two (at most three) little windows and two chambers, with earthen floors, and a raised divan of earth against the wall. The stranger is welcome, and the best fare they can supply is set before him. In such a scene he wants little save the customary pipe and cup of coffee, and liberty to remain a few hours and see the sun go down on shore and sea, on the desert and the gardens, on Lebanon and the noble mountain whose wastes of snow are seen in front towering toward Damascus. At the foot of the hills are some sepulchral grots cut in the rocks, probably the burial places of the ancient inhabitants. The people at work in the plain below are gathering in the cotton on the plantations. Their condition is not an impoverished one. The soil is fruitful and well repays the hand of industry. The wants of the natives are few and their habits frugal; the cultivation of the vine, of cotton and silk, and the care of the flocks occupy a great number. Vegetables of various kinds are easily and quickly raised; gourds, onions, olives, etc., with a little rice, furnish abundance of nourishing food; wine of the common kinds is cheap, and little animal food is used. The people still, as in ancient times, love the hills for a habitation rather than the vales; like Zarapha, the greater part of the villages are on the declivities. On the summits and sides of the hills are masses of gray rock; to the top, almost, there is pasturage, and the shepherd is watching his flock, and afar you may hear his Syrian pipe. It is a scene to which the messenger of heaven doubtless loved to retire; and how interesting and beautiful were the wanderings of Elijah, and the other great and hallowed characters of Scripture, over the desert and the plain, the vale and mountain, where their only communion was with God, and all their

light and joy and comfort were drawn from His love and His presence.

The drought continued, and at last the full horrors of famine, caused by the failure of the crops, descended on Samaria. The king and Obadiah, his chief domestic officer, divided between them the mournful duty of ascertaining that neither round the springs, which are so frequent a feature of central Palestine, nor in the nooks and crannies of the most shaded torrent-beds, was there any of the herbage left, which in those countries is so certain an indication of the presence of moisture. It is the moment for the reappearance of the prophet. He shows himself first to the minister. There, suddenly planted in his path, is the man whom he and his master have been seeking for more than three years. "As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee; and when they said, *he is not here*, he took an oath of the kingdom and nation that they found thee not." Before the sudden apparition of that wild figure, and that stern, unbroken countenance, Obadiah could not but fall on his face. And when the prophet directed him to tell his master, "Behold, Elijah is here," no wonder he feared that as on a former occasion, Elijah would disappear before he could return with the king. "It shall come to pass as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me." Obadiah properly enough puts in a plea for himself, founded on his services to the people of God in the time of their extremity. "I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth. Was it not told my lord what I did, when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? and now thou sayest, Go tell thy lord, Behold Elijah is here; and he shall slay me." The evil practices of Ahab and Jezebel had not contaminated the heart of

good Obadiah, but he retained his integrity even in the very midst of corruption. In the modern language of court-life, he was lord high chamberlain or lord mayor of the palace; and his influence with the king must have been great to enable him to retain his position, though a devout worshiper of Jehovah, during the fierce persecution of the prophets by Jezebel. Thus the goodness and the wisdom of the Lord were manifest, and let us remember for our encouragement in dark and troublous times, that the Lord provides a protector for His people in the very bosom of their inveterate enemies. In the profligate court of Ahab there was a righteous Obadiah, who took care of the afflicted servants of God; and in the very worst of times, and amidst the most corrupt people, there will be found some who stand steadfast in the faith, and prove "the salt of the earth."

Elijah relieves the apprehensions of the good minister of Ahab. "As Jehovah of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him to-day." Obadiah departs to inform Ahab that the man they seek is there. Ahab, arrived, at once begins to inveigh against the prophet as the cause of the general misery. "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" But Elijah answers, "I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord—and thou hast followed Baalim." The cause of your suffering is in *yourselves*, in your *sin*. I have pointed out your wickedness, I have warned you of the consequences, I have denounced the judgments of God against your disobedience, and these judgments have come according to my word; but I have only been an instrument in the hands of the Lord; *He* has punished you for your transgressions. "Now, therefore, send and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table."

The command of Elijah, standing alone but unawed amid

the train of Ahab, and speaking with Divine authority, is obeyed. An assembly of the people is convened. The idolatrous prophets are gathered upon the top of Carmel. Elijah rebukes the Israelites for their inconstancy, their indecision. "How long halt ye between two opinions?" Literally, how long do ye hop about on two boughs? a metaphor taken from birds hopping from bough to bough, not knowing on which to settle, now resting on one, now on another. "If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." Silence followed this appeal. The people answered not a word. Then Elijah proposed a *test*. "I only am a prophet of the Lord, while Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let us each prepare a sacrifice. Their devotion shall be *combined*, mine *single*. The god that answereth by fire, let him be God." The idolaters could not object to so fair a proposition. They prepare a bullock, and lay the pieces upon the wood; they cry unto their god from morning until noon, "O Baal, hear us!" But they meet with no response. They rend the skies with clamor; they leap upon the altar, as if they would ascend to meet those fires which delay to come down; Mount Carmel reechoes with their shrieks, but the heaven is silent. "And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awakened." At this the priests of Baal renew their horrid cries. In frantic rage they seize the instruments of sacrifice, and shed their own blood upon the altar. They continue their

ANKLETS.

hideous rites till the time of the evening sacrifice. But "there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded." Dismayed at the ill success of their shrieks, and wounds and frantic gesticulations, they sit down overwhelmed with shame and weariness and anguish, tormenting themselves with their own despair and dreading the success of their adversary.

"Then Elijah speaks unto all the people, Come near unto me." He repairs the altar of the Lord. He will not avail himself of the altar and the sacrifice profaned by idolatry. JEHOVAH'S altar, consecrated in better times to the service of God, dilapidated now through the degeneracy and neglect of Israel, is dear to him in its ruins. He lays twelve stones on this hallowed pile, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. He regards not the division of the nation, the perversion of ten tribes to Baal. Ministering here in the presence of one of the fragments into which the Theocracy had been broken, he yet ministers as the representative of the unsundered nation. He reminds the Israelites of their pristine glory, of the common origin of the twelve tribes; and his religious service, while a service for Israel, is one that includes Benjamin and Judah. He has respect unto the ancient covenant made with the holy patriarchs. If possible, he would bring back the ten tribes to their primitive simplicity of worship, prepare the way for reunion in the convulsed, dismembered nation, and restore harmony among the descendants of Jacob, now discordant.

Proceeding with his preparations, he bids the people dig a trench around the altar. He commands them to fill the trench with water, and pour water upon the sacrifice and the wood. It shall be made plain that a miracle has been wrought. There shall be no opportunity for delusion, and no room left for cavil. And now, the appointed hour of the evening sacrifice having come, Elijah reverently approaches the altar, and looking up to heaven, thus addresses the Al-

mighty, "O Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, and that I am Thy servant, and that I have done all these things at Thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me; that this people may know that Thou art the Lord God, and that Thou hast turned their hearts back again." Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and said, "The Lord, He is the God! The Lord, He is the God!" The great controversy is ended. The question of the land and of the age—is Baal or is Jehovah God?—is decided, by an appeal to the ancient, the chainless, the impartial element of fire. It is the question of this age, too! Show us the fire of heaven, still burning and vestal, in any church, and it sufficeth us; for Christ came to send fire upon earth, and what will we if it have gone out in white and barren ashes? The God that answereth by fire, answered Elijah, and the sun, His archer, loosened a ray to kindle the flame that was to witness to the one Supreme Jehovah. How glorious the prophet appears on Carmel, meet pedestal for a statue so sublime! In all history there are few grander scenes or stories than this. On the one hand the solitary servant of Jehovah, accompanied by his one attendant, with his wild shaggy hair, his scanty garb and sheepskin cloak, but with calm dignity of demeanor and the minutest regularity of procedure, repairing the ruined altar of Jehovah. On the other hand the eight hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and Ashtaroth, doubtless in all the splendor of their vestments, with the wild din of their vain repetitions, and the maddened fury of their disappointed hopes; and the silent people surrounding all.

The decision made, and the prophets of Baal slain, "Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink, and Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast

himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again, seven times. And it came to pass, at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass, in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel."

These vivid sentences bring before us the next act in this exciting drama. No sooner does the blood of the false prophets mingle with the brook Kishon, than Elijah sets himself to procure rain. Three years and a half the heavens have been shut up from yielding a drop of water to the thirsty land of Israel. All vegetation is parched and burnt up; man and beast reduced to skeletons, and all flesh faded like the grass. Elijah longs earnestly now, that for the glory of God and the people's good, the brazen skies may dissolve in rain, and the season of famine and distress terminate. For this purpose he must speak to God. The prayer of faith is to him what the staff was to Moses, who divided the Red Sea and struck water from the flinty rock. He first relieves himself of the company of Ahab and his attendants, and it is a sad picture which the weak and wicked king presents, eating and drinking, with an apathy almost incredible, upon the very heels of the sublime scenes enacted on the mountain, and in the very midst of the terrible slaughter of his own adherents. But while he is feasting, the prophet is praying. On Carmel's summit, as in a solitary closet where all is calm and still, no unbidden guests follow him, and he communes uninterruptedly with the Lord—his servant meanwhile, from

this lofty watch-tower surveying widely sea and land, and ready to give the first intelligence of the rising storm. Nor have they long to wait. Soon a little speck of vapor is seen. And then, one after another, dark thunder-clouds arise out of the sea; the heavens become black, the wind sets all the sea in motion, and roars through the forests, and a violent storm pours down upon the land. There is indeed "abundance of rain." O welcome streams, refreshing floods! The face of the earth is renewed, and all nature rejoices. A breath of life breathes over the fields; wood and meadow are clothed with new verdure, the birds resume their music in the branches, and man and beast and every living creature is resuscitated. And this new life is poured abundantly upon the prophet. "The hand of the Lord was upon Elijah." His bodily powers were invigorated, so that across the plain to Jezreel, almost a score of miles, through all the torrents of rain and tempest, he outran the royal chariot; but with Arab instinct no less marked than his endurance, stopping at the "entrance of Jezreel."

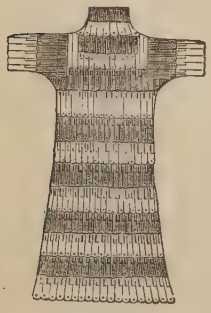
We can easily imagine Ahab hastily alighting from his chariot before the palace, and hurrying to the apartments of his proud, imperious queen, to announce the wonderful occurrences which he has just witnessed. "The Tishbite has triumphed! Fire from heaven has confirmed his word. Upon his prayer, with mine own eyes, I have seen flames fall from the skies, consume the burnt-offering, the wood, the stones, and lick up the water in the trench. All the people can bear witness to it. They fell on their faces and cried out, as with one voice, that Jehovah is God. The priests of Baal are slain; Elijah and the people have destroyed them, and their blood is flowing in the brook Kishon. They were laughed at as liars and impotent deceivers. Their authority and their worship is gone forever. There is universal enthusiasm for Elijah. He is a prophet of the living God. The miracle on Carmel has placed it beyond a doubt, and these

heavy rains completely confirm it. He has compelled clouds and rain from the brassy sky. He closed heaven and he has now opened it again."

But blackness gathers like a storm on the brow of the queen. And the weak king, whom the sacred historian speaks of as one "whom Jezebel his wife stirred up," soon begins to take another view of the wonders at Carmel, and of Elijah himself. Pliant like clay on the potter's wheel, and capable of taking any form, he is always ready to be what she is pleased to make of him. And Jezebel is resolved on vengeance. She sends a message to the prophet: "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time." And now we see the hero-prophet running for his life. His goal is the desert. On he flies through Benjamin and Judah. He will not halt, even in good King Jehoshaphat's dominions. Joy nerved his powerful frame to-day, now fear drives him. He never stops till he gets to Beersheba, a hundred miles away. He seems to feel that all Israel, who were shouting his praises a few hours ago on Carmel, are now at his heels, and seeking his life. Beersheba is at the edge of the desert, but he is not safe there. He has tired out his servant with two or three days' running, and the poor fellow cannot go any farther; but his master must get out into the wilderness "a day's journey" before he feels secure.

There he is at last, thoroughly fagged out in body and mind. He sits down under a broom-bush—a scanty shade in the hot sand. "And he requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life for I am not better than my fathers." Perhaps he meant the old Israelites who died in that desert six hundred years before. In his despondency he thinks that his existence is useless, and he feels unable any longer to bear the burden of life. Strange that Elijah should have become so weak and faint-hearted, who seemed invincible in the armor of hi

faith, and superior to every human weakness. Just now on Carmel, like the commander who cuts down the bridge behind him, leaving himself no alternative but death or victory, he taunted his adversaries, making them gnash their teeth and cut themselves with knives, but insuring for himself a terrible end, in case of failure, from his exasperated foes. But now this man, so stern, so iron, so independent, gives way to a fit of petulance and querulous despondency, and how do we account for it? First, it is evident that physical exhaustion has a great deal to do with his depression. He is faint, hungry, travel-worn. And much that we call spiritual depression has its seat in the body. The mind and the animal organism are closely allied. If you want to build up yourself in holy joy, among the means you are to employ is to expel bad humors from your body. Above all, let not those who are by nature of a melancholy constitution, or who have become so by disease, "write bitter things against themselves," and imagine themselves sinners above all others. This morbid temperament and tendency is to be fought against. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." More cheerful views will aid you in resisting sin. Use all means for the restoration of physical health and elasticity. But if your melancholy is incurable, if the phantom of despondency cannot be exorcised, it is well to recollect that it *is a phantom*, and not something which renders you guilty and vile in the sight of God, and obnoxious to His wrath. With patience await the good pleasure of God, and the day of your deliverance from the clog of a diseased body.



CUIRASS.

See how God treats the prophet's case. First, He sends him sweet and refreshing sleep. Like a little child, Elijah cried himself to sleep. Tired nature asserts herself, and brings rest and renovation for body and mind. But this rest is

God's gift. "So he giveth his beloved sleep." The burden of life is lightened for the prophet. The inward tempest of his soul subsides; grief and uneasiness depart; tormenting thoughts give place to sweet and spiritual rest. And so it is with us all. In the midst of the desert our gracious God provides for us a place of repose. The storm does not rage incessantly; the peaceful hours intervene unawares, and the burden upon our shoulders becomes for a while a resting pillow under our heads, and the Keeper of Israel sends us slumber in the midst of our sorrows.

And now Elijah, sleeping peacefully as in a royal pavilion, is touched by some one, and awakes. He looks, and behold a cake baking on the coals, and a jar of water; to this day all a Bedouin requires. There isn't much more of Elijah now than the physical man. He eats and drinks and goes to sleep again. In the morning he is nudged again, and finds his breakfast ready, and pursues his journey—a hundred miles of bleak desert to Horeb. Food, rest and exercise are prescribed for him by the Great Physician.

And next Jehovah calms his mind by the healing influences of nature. The hurricane sweeps the sky, and the earthquake shakes the ground. The heavens are lighted up till they are one mass of fire. All this expresses and reflects Elijah's feelings. The mode in which nature soothes us is by finding meeter and nobler utterance for our feelings than we can find in words; by expressing and exalting them. In expression there is relief, and Elijah's spirit rose with the spirit of the storm.

"On Horeb's rock the prophet stood,
The Lord before him passed;
A hurricane in angry mood,
Swept by him strong and fast;
The forest fell before its force,
The rocks were shivered in its course—
God was not in the blast

"Twas but the whirlwind of His breath,
Announcing danger, wreck and death.

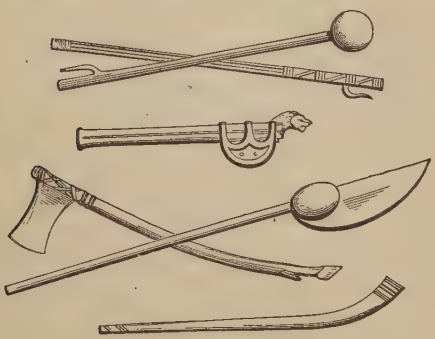
"It ceased. The air grew mute, a cloud
Came, muffling up the sun;
When through the mountain, deep and loud,
An earthquake thundered on;
The frighted eagle sprang in air.
The wolf ran howling from his lair—
God was not in the storm;
'Twas but the rolling of His car,
The trampling of His steeds from far."

And now all these manifestations of Divine power are ended. Tranquillity spreads gradually, like the stillness of the sanctuary, over all nature; and it seems as if every hill and dale, yea, the whole earth and skies, lay in silent homage at the footstool of Eternal Majesty. The very mountains seem to worship; the whole scene is hushed to profound peace; and now is heard

"A still, small voice, so shrill and clear
That all in heaven and earth might hear:
It spoke of peace, it spoke of love;
It spoke as angels speak above—
And God was in the voice."

There had been *spiritual* as well as physical causes of the prophet's depression, and these are met, and by communion with God, Elijah is strengthened. He had been bitterly disappointed in the result of the trial on Carmel. The people having with one voice acknowledged Jehovah, he supposed false worship was forever put down, idolatry at an end in Israel, and true piety about to find a place in the public heart. He thought the aim of his life, the transformation of Israel into a kingdom of God, was now accomplished. But in a single day all this bright picture was annihilated, and he was an exile fleeing from the vengeance of the idolatrous and still powerful queen. And passing rapidly from the pinnacle of hope to the extreme abyss of despondency, he

believes himself the *only* worshiper of the true God among the millions of Israel. But now God assures him that there are seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal. These, at least, have been braced and encouraged by his example, and perhaps have silently blessed him for their own courage and ability to stand fast in the day of trial. And here, mainly, was Elijah's success, and not in his great public triumphs. His usefulness is to be measured by the obedience of the seven thousand, and not by the shouts upon Carmel. And so the prophet, *the spokesman for God*, in every age, is not to be accounted successful because of listening crowds and the approval of the religious world. Ministerial success lies in altered lives and obedient, humble hearts; unseen work recognized in the judgment-day.



BATTLE-AXES.

But there was here a revelation to Elijah, not only concerning himself and the world, but concerning God also. He had shared in those outward manifestations of Divine power, accompanying his mission, which belonged to the Old Dispensation, and indicated the Divine presence and favor—the fire on Carmel, the storm from the Mediterranean, the avenging sword on the banks of the Kishon. He is now told that in all these, in the highest sense, God was not. Not in these, but in the still small gentle whisper of conscience and solitude, was the surest token that God was near to him. Not in his mission, grand and majestic as it was, would after ages so clearly discern the Divine inspiration, as in the still small voice of Justice and Truth that breathed through the writings of the later prophets, for whom he was preparing the

way, Hosea, Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Not in the vengeance which through Hazael and Jehu was to sweep away the house of Omir, so much as in the discerning Love which was to spare the seven thousand; not in the strong east wind that parted the Red Sea, or the fire that swept the top of Sinai, or the earthquake that shook down the walls of Jericho, would God be brought so near to man; as in the still small voice of the child at Bethlehem, as in the ministrations of Him whose cry was not heard in the streets, in the awful stillness of the Cross, in the never-failing order of Providence, in the silent, insensible influence of the good deeds and good words of God and of man. Thus the revelation at Horeb is at one with the revelation in the New Testament, the revelation in the person and life and works and death of Immanuel. We have a Gospel of Elijah. He, the furthest removed of all the prophets from the Evangelical Spirit and character, has yet enshrined in the heart of his story the most forcible of protests against the hardness of Judaism, the noblest anticipation of the breadth and depth of Christianity.

In the communication of the Lord to Elijah, three commands were laid upon him—to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, Jehu to be king over Israel, and Elisha, the son of Shaphat, to be his own successor. The last commission only was to be executed by him in person; the other two were reserved for Elisha to accomplish. He soon found the latter, plowing in the rich pastures of the Jordan. He "passed over to him," and slipping his mantle from his shoulders threw it over Elisha. This was a summons equivalent to that which our Saviour addressed to His disciples, "Leave all and follow me!" It was more than this, for it implied the fact that he was to succeed the man who called him. It was his investiture with present heirship to that very mantle, and the assurance of his future possession of it. In the East, a reputed saint, when dying, indicates his successor by bequeathing to him the mantle, the symbol of his spiritual power; and although

that mantle may be dirty, patched, tattered, threadbare, it is deemed of higher value than kingly robes; and the older it is the more precious it becomes. Elisha understood the sign, and was obedient to the heavenly call; but it is well to notice that notwithstanding his unquestionable talents he had hitherto contented himself with the humble avocation of a husbandman. How many, with similar endowments, would have thought themselves too good for the plow, and marked out for a wider sphere of life than that of a farmer. Their gifts must be employed for the good of the world, their light must not be hid under a bushel, they must go forth into the field of public labor, to enlighten and guide mankind! No such ambitious thoughts had entered the mind of Elisha. His pretensions went not beyond his plow and his husbandry; he saw his vocation in these quiet occupations, and "minded not high things." And his disposition is a striking and most beautiful contrast to what is often met with among the professed followers of God. Under the cover of religious zeal, or through mistaken notions of duty, there is a great deal of presumptuous and self-complacent pushing forward in the Church, and ignorance and self-conceit too often go hand in hand. We are undoubtedly to let our light shine before men, but every one should do so in the situation in which Providence has placed him. Not thy lips only, or principally, O Christian, but thy *life* is to be the lamp. It is sad when impudence is at a premium and modesty at a discount, when self-assertion is the road to success, and diffidence and self-distrust and the wish not to be conspicuous are held to be evidences of lukewarmness in religion, a low grade of piety, and a want of interest in the cause of Christ. Happy would it be for Zion if that vain activity which is not of God but of the world, were *confined* to the world, and not brought within that sacred organization whose distinguishing characteristic is its spirituality, and which can only be truly advanced by the use of spiritual means and appliances.

Elisha was the son of a substantial land-owner, as appears by the fact that although the prophet found him personally engaged in the field, he was plowing with no less than twelve yoke of oxen. To this day in Syria a man's wealth is estimated by the number of plows which he works, or by the number of yokes of oxen he employs in drawing them. There were probably a number of servants at work in the field with Elisha, and to these and to the persons who had come from town, he gave an extemporaneous feast by slaying a yoke of oxen, and burning the implements to dress the meat. He then took his departure with Elijah, who must have been much comforted in obtaining such a companion and helper. These personal followers and attendants upon holy or learned men are a class well known in the East. Though persons of some consideration in the world, they feel glad and honored in being allowed to discharge for their master the light servile duties which his habits of life require, but which they would feel it a degradation to render to any other man.

Until Elisha became distinguished on his own account, he was known as "Elisha who poured water on the hands of Elijah." The Orientals, in washing, never if they can help it dip their hands in water unless it be running water, as they abhor the idea of using water already soiled. To pour the water upon the hands from a vessel, however, requires the assistance of another, and this is usually the office of a servant, and the most frequent one he has to render to the person of his master, which renders it appropriate as the description of a personal attendant. Friends and fellow-travelers, however, often pour water on each other's hands in the absence of a servant, as it is inconvenient to fill one hand repeatedly from a vessel held in the other, and requiring to be laid down

SKIN BOTTLES.

frequently and taken up again. No one washes thus who can find any one willing to pour water on his hands. In-doors, an ewer and basin of copper are commonly used. The water poured from the ewer upon the hands, falls into the basin held below them, which commonly has a perforated bottom through which the used water passes out of sight.

About the time when Elijah called Elisha and consecrated him to be a prophet, a terrible war broke out between Syria and Israel. The Syrian king, Ben-hadad, with an enormous host, aided by thirty-two tributary allies, took the field against Ahab, but was defeated and compelled to terms of peace. Where Elijah abode during these tumultuous times we are not informed. It is only after the disturbances are over that we find him re-appearing in the narrative, and this as an embassador of God, sent to reprove Ahab. The crime which the latter had committed against Naboth was the occasion of the prophet's mission.

BOTTLES.

After the war was finished, Ahab had retired to his country residence at Jezreel, the Windsor of Israel. This palace was situated on the heights at the western extremity of Mt Gilboa—a fine site for the royal mansion, commanding a noble view, overlooking on the west the whole of the great plain to the long ridge of Carmel, and extending in the opposite direction down the broad, low valley to Bethshean, and toward the mountains beyond the Jordan. To pass away the time, Ahab amused himself with beautifying and enlarging his sumptuous palace and gardens. Adjoining the latter was a vineyard, which belonged to the paternal inheritance of Naboth. This the king wished to purchase, and he offered the

proprietor an exchange of land, or any price that he might choose to ask for it. But Naboth, strong in his indefeasible right of property, declined to part with it at all, on the ground that he could not and would not alienate a property which he had derived from his fathers, and which it behooved him to transmit to his descendants. He seems to have regarded the proposal with a kind of religious horror: "The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee."

At the original occupation of Canaan, every family had a portion of land assigned it by lot. This remained in the family, and could only be legally alienated for a term of years, ending at the next jubilee year, when all the lands which had been thus leased reverted to the original owners, or to their heirs. But the jubilee year had ceased to be observed, and it is likely that many sold their lands in perpetuity. It is true this would be illegal, but few heirs would stand up to assert their claims to lands held by kings and other high personages. Thus by purchase, and by means of the estates of persons attainted of treason, which lapsed to the king, the crown was enabled to acquire a considerable landed property, which would have been impossible, had due attention been paid to the law of Moses, by which the land was strictly tied up in private hands, in order that none should have too much, nor any too little. The practices by which "field was added to field" were severely reprehended by the prophets.

Ahab seems to have made no effort to secure by violence the land which Naboth had refused to sell. But his own garden, in which he had hitherto taken so much pleasure, lost all value and beauty in his eyes, since the nice plan he had formed for its improvement was balked by his neighbor. We should not wonder if he decapitated with his staff half the flowers in his garden, while this fit of ill-humor was upon him. At last he betook himself to bed, and lay with his face to the wall, refusing to take any food. This pitiable display

of childish fretfulness is more than we would have expected even from Ahab. No wonder such a man as this was a mere tool in the hands of his wife. And perhaps, relying upon her fertility of resource and power of action, he indulged his ill-humor on purpose to draw her attention to the matter As soon as she heard of his strange behavior, she came to him, and soon learned the cause of his affliction, when she exclaims, with indignant surprise, "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?" But she did not disappoint the confidence which the king was accustomed to put in her resources; for she added, "Arise and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry, for *I will give thee the vineyard.*" How? Ahab did not care to inquire. He only knew she had said it, and would do it; and that was enough for him. He gave her authority to act as she pleased in the matter, by entrusting to her his signet, which gave her the power of issuing in his name whatever orders she liked. We are to remember that in those days (and the custom continues in the East), in giving validity to documents, names were not signed by the hand in writing, but impressed by a seal on which the name was engraved. Hence the importance which is attached to the signet throughout the sacred books.

Thus armed, Jezebel sent orders that the elders and nobles of the town should proclaim a fast, which was wont to be done when any great calamity had occurred, or any dreadful crime had been committed. She requires them to assemble the people, and to have two lawless characters ready to give false evidence against Naboth, and accuse him of having uttered blasphemies and curses against God and the king. This being done, Naboth was condemned unheard, dragged out of the town, and cruelly stoned to death. And when the bloody execution was accomplished, Jezebel went triumphantly to Ahab and said: "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth, the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead." The estate had

lapsed to the crown by his execution on the charge of treason, consisting in cursing the king; for which reason that charge was added to the other, which of itself was capital.

Instead of shrinking with horror from the deed, Ahab, now that it was done, accepted it with all its consequences, by hastening to take possession of his blood-stained acquisition, with admiration, doubtless, of his wife's decision of character and hardihood, qualities which inspire such souls as his with deep reverence. Excuse is sometimes made for him as not an essentially wicked man, but only a weak one, overborne by the powerful will of a resolute woman. But all wickedness is weakness, and is not all weakness wickedness and most of all in a king? He to whose care the welfare of a nation has been entrusted, has no right to be weak. The weakness of Ahab consisted in an effeminate, ease-loving, indolent character, indisposed to exertion, unless thoroughly roused by some awakening stimulus. He was such a man as would rather allow what he feels to be wrong, for the sake of a quiet life, than take the trouble of asserting and maintaining what he knows to be right. To battle against, to shake off this sloth of temper, which made him the tool of others, and rendered him impotent for all good, was his duty as a man, and ten-fold his duty as a king; and to neglect that duty was wickedness, was ruin; and it ended, as such neglect does, in bringing down upon him ten-fold the trouble and disturbance of ease which he had striven to avoid. "Anything for an easy life," seems to have been Ahab's rule of conduct. But a ruler has no right to an easy life. It is hard work to be a king, and especially in an Eastern country, where many duties of decision, of judgment, and of action, devolve upon the sovereign, which in Western countries are turned over to his advisers and ministers.

Jezebel was just the woman to manage such a man, and she soon found how to manage Ahab as she pleased, and to become in fact the reigning sovereign of Israel, while on him

devolved the public responsibility of her acts. It was not by imperious temper, though she was imperious, or by palpable domineering, that she managed this. No. She made herself *necessary* to him, necessary to his ease, his comfort, his pleasures. She worked for him; she planned for him; she decided for him. She saved him a world of trouble. She taught him to consider the strength of her will necessary to supply the weakness of his own, necessary to save him the labor of exertion and thought. Prompt in decision, ready in resource, quick in invention, ruthless in action, she saw her way at once to the point at which she aimed, and would cut with a sharp stroke through knotty matters which the king shrank from the labor of untying. Thus, as in the case before us, she was often able to secure for her husband the object of his desires, which he himself shrunk from pursuing or despaired of obtaining; and in accepting it from her hands, he cared not to inquire too nicely whether it were stained with blood, and whether it were heaping on his head coals of fire, which would one day consume him.

And now, elated with joy, Ahab goes down in state to take possession of the coveted garden. It is deserted and silent, but the grassy plats are green, and the clustering vines rich with the promise of fruit. In kingly pride and pomp, followed by his attendants, he enters the inclosure and surveys with delight his new possession. The dead can make no remonstrance; treason clears away all title, and he is already planning the improvements and decorations that will make it fit to become a part of the royal grounds. The perfumed air stirs softly the fresh leaves that quiver in the sunlight, and the trees make grateful shadows on every side. With heart free from anxiety, he is strolling along the sheltered, silent walks, when suddenly an apparition obstructs the path. A solitary figure, with snowy beard, and long waving locks, and a hairy mantle over his shoulders, stands silent and unawed before him. And well the king remembers Carmel, and the

girt and glorious homicide who mingled the blood of the false prophets with the waters of Kishon. What a picture they present in the quiet garden! On the one side stands the monarch, royally appareled, and behind him his gorgeously-attired retinue; on the other that silent, solitary, coarse-clad figure. Had a thunderbolt fallen from the sky, the king could not have been more astonished. He had hoped that Jezebel had frightened away this unwelcome guest forever. If not dead, he thought him far enough away beyond the mountains. But lo, he stands before him like an apparition from another world; nay, like the ghost of the murdered Naboth. Anticipating the prophet's message, he is the first to speak, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" "I *have* found thee," replied this angel of his doom, in tones that sent the blood back on his heart. Then follows the curse, in terms fearful to any Oriental, peculiarly terrible to a Jew, and most of all significant to the apostate prince of the northern kingdom.

Ahab was not, like his wife, utterly hardened. The fearful words of the prophet struck him down, and humbled him completely. He rent his clothes, he assumed the habit of a mourner, he "fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went softly." His misery was real, and the Lord had some compassion on him; for the destruction of his house was deferred, that his eye might be spared that doleful sight. But his personal doom was accomplished three years after, when he was slain in battle against Ben-hadad. His death was kingly, and became him better than his life. When mortally wounded, he directed his chariot to be quietly driven

BACTRIAN CAMEL.

aside to have his wounds dressed; and then returned to the battle, supported in his chariot, until the evening, when he died. His body was brought to Samaria, and when his chariot and armor were washed in the pool of Samaria, the dogs licked up his blood as they had done that of Naboth at Jezreel. Thus the words of the prophet, "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine," were virtually fulfilled in himself, while they were *literally* accomplished in his son Jehoram, to whom his doom was in some sense transferred, on his humbling himself before the Lord.

The next appearance of Elijah is in connection with the illness of Ahaziah, who succeeded his father Ahab in the throne of Israel, but did not reign more than two years. He was fully under the influence of his mother, and sanctioned the idolatries she had introduced. His death was the result of a disaster that befell him, described as a fall through a lattice that was in his upper chamber. It is probable that the word rendered lattice means a rail, and in leaning against the rail upon the inner side of the house-top, it gave way, and he fell into the court below. His injuries were so serious that he sent to an oracle or shrine of Baal, at the Philistine town of Ekron, to learn the issue of his illness. But the oracle is nearer at hand than the distant Ekron. An intimation from God is given to the prophet, probably at that time inhabiting one of the recesses of Carmel, and, as on the former occasions, he suddenly appears on the path of the messengers, without preface or inquiry utters his message of death, and as rap-

ARABIAN CAMEL.

idly disappears. The men turn back with the fatal message, and describe the appearance of the person who had met them, "a hairy man and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins." The king had probably seen him during his father's life, and at all events that wild-looking, hairy man, with his shaggy mantle and leather girdle, is a picture quite familiar to him. He says at once, "It is Elijah the Tishbite." But instead of trembling at the prediction of his certain death, he sends a troop of fifty men to capture the prophet. They find him sitting solitary and alone on Mount Carmel. This is a spot sacred to him, for here God set His seal upon him in the sight of all the people. As he sits wrapped in meditation, he sees the soldiers winding through the vale below, their lances glittering in the sunlight, on their way to take him prisoner. He knows from whom they come, and what they want, but he takes no steps to escape. Serene and composed, he awaits their approach. The captain calls to him, "Thou man of God, the king has said come down." Years ago, at his request, fire descended on this very mountain, and consumed the sacrifice; so now at his bidding new forks of flame leap from the sky and stretch the whole fifty in a ghastly row upon the earth. The king, unappalled, sends a second party which share the same fate. The altered tone of the leader of the third company brings Elijah down. And perhaps his cheerful going with this last troop is meant to teach, that while judgments are for the wicked, yet the door of mercy will swing open for those who becomingly approach it. Impending ruin may be averted by timely repentance and earnest entreaty. Arrived at the palace, the fearless prophet repeats in person to the king the words of rebuke and death which he had sent by the messengers, and is suffered to go away unharmed. Ahaziah, dying soon after, is succeeded by his brother Jehoram.

The closing transaction of Elijah's life introduces us to a locality heretofore unconnected with him. It was at Gilgal

that the prophet received the Divine intimation that his departure was at hand. He endeavors to persuade Elisha to remain behind, while he goes on an errand for Jehovah. "Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel." But Elisha will not so easily give up his master. "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee." Together they visit the schools of the prophets, and at each place there has been a heavenly intimation that their master is to be taken away. The students leave their rooms, and gather at the doors, and gaze in wonder till the majestic figure is lost in the distance. Elijah expresses again and again his desire to proceed alone, but Elisha refuses to be separated from him, and his affectionate persistence conquers. The two set off across the undulating plain of burning sand to the distant river. Fifty men of the sons of the prophets ascend the abrupt heights behind the town of Jericho, to watch what happens in the distance. Talking as they go, the prophet's eye waxing brighter, and his step quicker, and his port loftier, they approach the stream, and stand on the shelving bank beside its swift, brown current. But they are not to stop even here. It is as if the aged Gileadite cannot rest till he again sets foot on his own side of the river. He rolls up his mantle, as into a staff, and with his old energy strikes the waters, and they divide hither and thither and permit them to go over on dry ground. Resuming their conversation, they go but a little way till there appears a chariot of fire, and mounting it, as a king his car, the prophet is carried in a rushing whirlwind upward, his mantle falling, and Elisha exclaiming, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" We may not follow his triumphal progress, but doubtless as like a prince he had mounted the chariot, so with prince-like majesty did he direct the fiery steeds, gaze around on the peopled wilderness of worlds, outstrip the comet's glowing wheel, rise above the sun, and the sun's sun, and every system from which the sun's system is

visible, cross the firmaments of space, pass through the gates into the city, enter amid the rising, welcoming, and wondering first-born of heaven, and at last merge in the engulfing glory of the great white throne.

Such honor have not all God's saints, and surely here the dignity of the prophetic office came to its height, when in the fullness of its discharge it swelled up into heaven, and when he, who, in the grandeur of his commission, had walked among men as a being of another race, was lifted up before his time, like a pearl from the dust, and added to an immortal and sinless company.

A strange and stormy life was that which thus melted into the light of heaven. The tempest, fire, and whirlwind accompany and symbolize his mission. We see his shaggy form outlined against the sky on Mt. Carmel, bringing down the fire from heaven, and the storm from the deep. From thence he is transferred to Horeb, where he stands wrapped in the whirlwind and the fire and the earthquake. We look again, and seated on Mount Carmel, he is bringing the forked lightning from heaven on those seeking to take him. He disappears from sight, and we scarcely see him again till, seated in a chariot of fire, he is mounting the heavens to return no more, until called back to earth to take part in the glorious scenes upon the Mount of Transfiguration.

CANDLESTICK.

Elijah has been entitled "the grandest and the most romantic character that Israel ever produced." Certainly there is

no personage in the Old Testament whose career is more vividly portrayed, or who exercises on us a more remarkable fascination. His rare, sudden and brief appearances, his undaunted courage, his fiery zeal, the brilliancy of his triumphs, the pathos of his despondency, the glory of his departure, and the calm beauty of his re-appearance on the holy mount, throw such a halo of brightness around him as is surpassed by none of his compeers in the sacred story. And unless it be Moses, it is doubtful if so much of thrilling interest attaches to any other Scripture character. The parallel is most striking between these two greatest of the prophets. Both received visions on Horeb, to each of them God appeared there in fire, earthquakes, and other forms of grandeur and sublimity. Both resorted to the wilderness, fasted forty days, were sent on embassies to rebellious kings, dispensed miraculous food, quenched the drought of Israel, were zealous for the extermination of idolatry, divided the waters, and finished their glorious labors near the banks of the Jordan, not *in* but *overlooking* the earthly Canaan, when summoned upward to the heavenly one. What one effects by his rod, the other accomplishes by his mantle. The body of the one is hidden, the body of the other is translated. And they both, and they only, revisit the earth in the body, and stand glorified with their Lord upon Tabor.

But in tracing this parallel, we cannot forget that Elijah in many respects is unique among the characters of the Bible, and that in some he overtops even the vast proportions of the great law-giver and founder of the Hebrew nation. "Alone, alone, alone,"—so thrice over is the word emphatically repeated—the loftiest, sternest spirit of the true faith raised up face to face with the proudest and fiercest spirit of the old Asiatic paganism, Elijah rose up against Jezebel. And so he stands alone in many senses among the prophets. Nursed in the bosom of Israel, the prophetical portion of the chosen people, vindicating the true religion

from the nearest danger of overthrow, setting at defiance, by invisible power, the whole forces of the Israelitish kingdom, he reached a height certainly only equaled by Moses and Samuel, in the traditions of his country. And he is the prophet for whose return in later years his countrymen have looked with most eager hope. The last prophet of the Old Dispensation clung to this consolation in the decline of the State. In the Gospel history we find this expectation constantly excited in each successive appearance of a new prophet. It was a fixed belief of the Jews that he had appeared again and again as an Arabian merchant, to wise and good rabbis at their prayers or on their journeys. He is supposed to be present at circumcisions, and a seat is kept vacant for him. Passover after passover, the Jews of our own day place the paschal cup on the table, and set the door wide open, believing that that is the moment when Elijah will reappear. When goods are found and no owner comes, when difficulties arise and no solution appears, the answer is, "Put them by till Elijah comes."

He gave the whole order a new impulse, both in form and spirit, such as it had not had since the death of Samuel. The companies of the prophets now reappear, bound by a still closer connection with Elijah than they had had with Samuel. Then they were "companies, bands, of prophets;" now they are "sons, children, of the prophets;" and Elijah first and Elisha afterward, appeared as the "Abbot," the "Father in God," of the whole community. And yet he was not so much a prophetic teacher, as the precursor of prophetic teachers. As his likeness in the Christian era came to prepare the way for One greater than himself, so Elijah came to prepare the way for the close succession of prophets, who, for the next hundred years, sustained both Israel and Judah by hopes and promises before unknown.

His stern seclusion is reproduced in John the Baptist, and in him is always contrasted with the social, gentle character

of Christ. He, like the Baptist, "came neither eating nor drinking." He, like John's disciples, "fasted oft." He was the original type of the hermit, the monk, the Puritan. The barefooted order of Carmelites, not indeed by historical but by spiritual descent, may well claim him as their founder. But he is not the type of ordinary Christians. Although "among them that were born of woman" in old time "there were none greater than" he and the prophet who came in his spirit and power, as the forerunner of the New Dispensation, yet, "notwithstanding, the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than they." When the two apostles appealed to the example of Elijah, "to call down fire from heaven," the Master "rebuked them and said, ye know not what spirit ye are of."

The other prophets, Moses, Samuel, Elisha, Isaiah, were constantly before the eyes of their countrymen. But Elijah they saw only by partial and momentary glimpses. He belonged to no special place. The very name of his birthplace is disputed, for we stand in doubt of the meaning of Tishbite. "There was no nation or kingdom" to which Ahab had not sent to find him, "but behold, they found him not." As soon as he was seen, "the breath of the Lord carried him away, whither, they knew not." He was as if constantly in the hand of God. "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand," was his habitual expression—a slave constantly waiting to do his Master's bidding. For an instant he was to be seen here and there at spots far apart; sometimes in the ravine of the Cherith in the Jordan valley, sometimes in the forests of Carmel; now on the sea-shore of Zidon at Zarephath; now in the wilderness of Horeb, in the distant south; then on the top of some lonely height on the way to Ekron; then snatched away "on some mountain or some valley," in the desert of the Jordan. He was in his life-time what he still is in the traditions of the Eastern Church, the prophet of the mountains. And not unnaturally the Mussulman traditions confound him

with the mysterious being, "the Immortal One," the Eternal Wanderer, who appears ever and anon, to set right the wrongs of earth, and repeat the experience of ages past. And mediæval alchemists and magicians strove to trace up their dark arts to Elijah, the Tishbite, as the father of alchemy. Such a hold has he taken upon the imaginations of Jew, Moslem and Christian, and alike of the evil and the good.

He was the great representative of the tribes beyond the Jordan. Their wild and secluded character is his no less. Wandering, as we have seen, over the hills of Palestine, with

JEZREEL.

no rest or fixed habitation—fleet as the wind, when the hand of the Lord was upon him, and he ran before the chariot of Ahab from Carmel to Jezreel—he was like the heroes of his own tribe in Gad, in David's life, who swam the Jordan in flood-time, "whose faces were as the faces of lions, and whose feet were as swift as the roes upon the mountains;" like the Bedouins from the same region of the present day, who run with unwearied feet by the side of the traveler's camel, and

whose strange forms are seen for a moment behind rock or tree, in city or field, and then vanish again into their native wilderness. He was like them, too, in outward appearance, with his long shaggy hair, his girdle of hide, and his rough sheep-skin mantle.

These characteristics of the Arab life were dignified but not destroyed by his high prophetic mission. And the fact that this mission was entrusted not to a dweller in royal city or prophetic school, but to a genuine child of the deserts and forests of Gilead, is in exact accordance with the dispensations of Providence in other times. So the unity of God was asserted of old by the wandering chief from Ur of the Chaldees; by the Arabian shepherd at Sinai; and by another Arabian shepherd, in later ages, at Mecca and Medina. So came John, the son of Zachariah, in the same wilderness whence Elijah came, and whence he finally disappeared, sustained by the wild and scanty fare of the desert, clothed in a like rough and scanty garb, calling the nation to repentance by the same strange appearance, and by the same simple preaching. So, in later times, the Anchorites of Egypt and of Russia have come forth from their solitudes with a startling effect, which nothing else could have produced, to call kings and nations to a sense of their guilt, and of their duty to God and man.

According to the Jewish legends, Elijah at his birth was wrapped in swaddling bands of fire, and fed with flames. During the whole of his course, "he rose up as a fire, and his word blazed as a torch." And as in its fiery force and energy, so in its mystery, the end corresponded with the beginning. He appeared in the history we know not whence; he is gone in like manner. As of Moses, so of Elijah, "no man knoweth his resting-place unto this day."

The depth of the impression which he made upon the mind of his nation may be judged from the belief which, as we have stated, has always prevailed, that Elijah will appear

for the relief and restoration of his country. When Christ asked his disciples, "Whom do men say that I am?" they replied, "Some say Elijah." And many of the Jews believe that the prophet is employed in missions to mankind, and is in some sense ubiquitous, being present in many places at one time. He is visible only to those deeply versed in the Cabbala, and is described as a venerable old man with a long beard. Those who are the special objects of his notice are highly favored. "Happy," says one, "is he who hath beheld him in dreams, happy he who hath saluted him with peace. and to whom the salutation of peace hath been returned." One of the Jewish commentators explains how Elijah became qualified for these missions. "He was carried away in a powerful wind, with a chariot and horses of fire, that his moisture might be exhaled and dried away. Thus he became light and swift, to appear in all places. He has no need of meat and drink, or of anything necessary to human life, because his body was transformed into a spiritual state, and he received a spiritual nature."

THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION.

We know, by the sure word of Scripture, that Elijah did once return to this world. The record is given us by three of the Evangelists. "Jesus took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistering. And behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spoke of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." Mountains seem to be a kind of natural mediators between the earth and the skies, and God has often selected them as the scenes of His most wondrous manifestations and displays of glory. Quiet islands amid the ocean of worldly confusion, upon them some of the most remarkable transactions in sacred history have taken place. They are specially

connected with the life of Elijah, as well as with other Scripture characters and incidents. The ark rested on Mount Ararat. The law was promulgated with solemn grandeur from Mount Sinai. Aaron, the first high priest, was commanded to ascend Mount Hor, and die there. Moses, the great law-giver, viewed the Promised Land from Mount Nebo, died upon its summit, and was buried in one of the clefts of the mountain. The blessing rested on Mount Ebal and the curse on Mount Gerizim. It was on Mount Moriah that Abraham was commanded to take his son, his only son Isaac, and offer him as a sacrifice; and it was there that he met deliverance in the distressing hour, and erected his altar, and inscribed upon it, "Jehovah Jireh," the Lord will provide. It was on Mount Carmel that Elijah prayed so earnestly for rain, and by his intercession opened the windows of heaven, and brought relief and salvation to the suffering people and nation. It was on Mount Horeb that he witnessed the sublime manifestations of Jehovah's power, and heard the still, small voice that spake of peace and love, and calmed and soothed his anxious, troubled spirit. It was on Mount Tabor that the Saviour was transfigured, on Mount Calvary that He died, and on Mount Olivet that He ascended into heaven.

Among these consecrated spots, Tabor will ever stand conspicuous—a perpetual memorial of the wondrous scene enacted upon it. No cloud has rested on any mountain like that of Tabor. No light has gilded their tops like the glory which emanated there from the Sun of Righteousness. No prayer ever ascended from any altar or high place, which was answered more richly than that which upon Tabor opened heaven, and lighted up the gloom of night with celestial glory. And no mountain ever gathered upon its summit an assembly so honored and so illustrious, as that which was convened to receive the testimony of God to the Sonship of Jesus. In appearance, too, Tabor is one of the most interesting and remarkable of the mountains of Palestine. It rises

abruptly from the plain, and stands entirely insulated, except on the west, where a narrow ridge connects it with the hills of Nazareth. Symmetrical in its proportions, and crowned with trees and odoriferous shrubs, if there is anything beautiful in nature, it is this green and rounded mountain pyramid of Galilee. The top consists of an irregular platform, embracing a circuit of about a half an hour's walk, and presents one of the most extensive and charming prospects to be found in the world. To the right the eye, after resting on Mount Carmel, beholds the "great sea" stretching westward until bounded by the horizon. Northward appears the glittering snowy cupola of Hermon, with the black ridge of Lebanon beneath it. Toward the south, the eye rests upon the beautiful verdure of luxuriant vineyards and orange groves, and farther on upon the mountains of Samaria. Whilst to the left gleams the Sea of Tiberias, intersecting the waving grain-fields of the plain of Esdraelon.

But the little company gathered there eighteen centuries ago were not occupied with this enchanting vision. It was night, but over the group shone a dazzling radiance, and about them was a halo of glory. Small in number was that assembly, but none since the world began was more important or more honored. Three of the disciples were there. Moses and Elijah were there. The Law and the Prophets, the Gospel and the Apostles, were represented. And the center of that constellation was the Sun of Righteousness, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the SAVIOUR of Moses and Elijah, of Peter and James and John, and of all who believe in His name.

And what was the theme of conversation among the august personages who compoesd this little group? "They spoke of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." There is, then, something more glorious than translation. So Elijah told the disciples; so he tells us. The death of a malefactor, the death of the cross; this, in the eyes of saints

and angels, is far more glorious. This breaks down all distinctions; this exhibits the eternal Son of God uniting Himself with the weakness and the death of every creature. This makes it a shame to wish that there were any other way into the full and open presence of God, than the one which He has consecrated; and makes us desirous of being partakers with Him in His death, as well as in His life. This teaches us the glory of self-sacrifice, and suffering, and obedience even unto death. And in the cross, we see Righteousness and Wisdom and Love triumphing over all forms of human and natural power, and claiming them as the servants, and us as the children, of Him of whom Moses and Elijah and every prophet in the old world bore witness while they were on earth, and bear witness now in glory.

ELIJAH AT HOREB.

'Tis well true hearts should for a time retire
To holy ground, in quiet to aspire
  Towards promised regions of serener grace:
On Horeb with Elijah let us lie,
Where all around, on mountain, sand and sky,
  God's chariot wheels have left distinctest trace.

There, if in jealousy and strong disdain
We to the sinner's God of sin complain,
  Untimely seeking here the peace of heaven—
"It is enough, O Lord! now let me die,
Even as my fathers did; for what am I
  That I should stand where they have vainly striven?"

He on the rock may bid us stand, and see
The outskirts of His march of mystery,
  His endless warfare with man's wilful heart:
First, His great power He to the sinner shows:
Lo! at His angry blast the rocks unclose,
  And to their base the trembling mountains part.

Yet the Lord is not here—'tis not by power
He will be known; but darker tempests lower;
  Still, sullen heavings vex the laboring ground.
Perhaps His presence, through all depth and height—
Best of all gems that deck his crown of light—
  The haughty eye may dazzle and confound.

God is not in the earthquake; but behold
From Sinai's caves are bursting, as of old,
  The flames of His consuming jealous ire.
Woe to the sinner should stern justice prove
His chosen attribute; but he in love
  Hastes to proclaim, "God is not in the fire."

The storm is o'er; and, hark! a still small voice
Steals on the ear to say, Jehovah's choice
  Is ever with the soft, meek, tender soul;
By soft, meek, tender ways He loves to draw
The sinner, startled by His ways of awe:
  Here is our Lord, and not where thunders roll.

Back, then, complainer; loathe thy life no more,
Nor deem thyself upon a desert shore
  Because the rocks the nearer prospects close.
Yet in fallen Israel are there hearts and eyes
That day by day in prayer like thine arise:
  Thou knowest them not, but their Creator knows

THE PROPHET OF THE SUCCESSION

THE MOCKERS DESTROYED

V.

ELISHA.

Contrast with Elijah—The Son of a Farmer—The Plowman called to be a Prophet—Farewell to Father and Mother—Slays a Yoke of Oxen and gives an entertainment—Translation of Elijah—Master and Disciple Converse—"A Double Portion of thy Spirit"—The Friends Parted—Elisha takes up the Mantle—Divides Jordan—Heals the Waters of Jericho—Bears Destroy Forty-two Insolent Youths at Bethel—Good Men not to be Despised—A Word to Parents—Mt. Carmel—War—The Confederate Camp—The Suppliant Kings—Music and Prophecy—Trenches filled without Rain—Water Mistaken for Blood—Human Sacrifices—The Pot of Oil—Lands for the Landless—God takes care of His Children—The Shunammite—The Prophet's Chamber—The Grateful Guest—Death and Life—The Land Restored—Death in the Pot—A Friend in Need—The Hebrew Maid—The Journey to Israel—Naaman before Elisha—The Jordan—Gehazi—Abana and Pharpar—Damascus—The Borrowed Axe—Elisha's Safeguard—Samaria Besieged—The Deserted Tents—Hazael—Jehu—Naboth Avenged—Jezebel—Slaughter of the Princes—The Rechabite—The Massacre at Samaria—Character of Jehu—The Arrow of Deliverance—The Character of Elisha's Ministry.

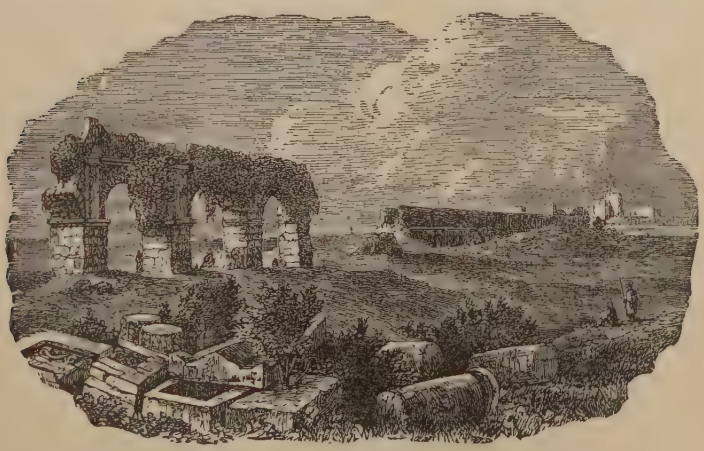
THERE is an infinite variety in nature and in grace, and the Lord in choosing instruments to accomplish His purposes, employs men of very different gifts and dispositions; and nowhere is there a more striking contrast presented than in the lives and characters of Elijah and Elisha, the two great prophets of the kingdom of Israel. Elijah bursts upon us as if he had descended from heaven. His first utterance is that of a delegate of Omnipotence, one commissioned to shut and open heaven, and to wield the thunderbolts of Jehovah. He came as the champion of the old, forgotten law. If Moses was the giver of the law, he was its restorer. He was a Reformer, and not a Theologian. He wrote, he predicted, he taught almost nothing. He is to be valued not for what he said, but for what he did; not because he created, but because he destroyed. Of all the prophets he is the one most removed from modern times, from Christian civilization; while the life

of Elisha shows more than any other the patience and tenderness of the Gospel. Round the picture of Elijah in the Eastern churches at the present day, the Orientals by a natural association place the decapitated heads of their enemies. Abdallah Pasha, the fierce lord of Acre, almost died of terror from a vision in which he believed himself to have seen Elijah sitting on the top of Carmel. There is a wildness, an isolation, a roughness about him, contrasting forcibly with the mild beneficence of his successor. He was a true Bedouin child of the desert. The clefts of the Cherith, the wild shrubs of the desert, the cave at Horeb, the top of Carmel, were his haunts and his resting-places. If he enters a city, it is only to deliver his message of fire and be gone. And his family connections are altogether concealed from us. Not a word is mentioned of his father and his mother, nor is there anywhere an allusion to his genealogy or relationships. The softer feelings of domestic life seem shaded by the experience of his elevated soul, and there is an imposing majesty in his character which keeps us at a distance. We are awed and repelled, and feel that he is like Sinai with the bounds set round about the mount.

But Elisha, in his appearance, his manners, and his introduction to our notice, is like any other man. We are conducted to his house. We see him clothed in the ordinary garments of an Israelite of his day, his hair is trimmed, in contrast to the disordered locks of Elijah, and he uses a walking-stick of the kind usually carried by grave or aged citizens. We are made acquainted with his occupation and connections. We behold him at his plow as a common husbandman, as one whose feelings and experience are much the same as our own; who partakes with us in the common affairs and circumstances of life; who is closely allied by blood, affection and tenderness to the circle in which he lives; who is a stranger to none of the sensibilities of our common nature; who can feel the pain of separation and taking leave

of friends; and in whose bosom beats the heart of an ordinary member of the family circle. We can venture familiarly to approach him. His features reflect only mildness and humility, instead of the consciousness of his dignified station; and the most timid may feel comfortable and at home in his society.

In short, while Elijah, by the thunder of his mighty deeds, rouses the nation out of the deadly sleep of idolatry and crime, and breaks their hearts with the hammer of the Law, it is Elisha's office to bind up the broken-hearted and to comfort them that mourn. He is an evangelist, and represents the



RUINS.

loving-kindness of the Lord, and he is nurtured under circumstances well suited to develop the more tender feelings of the soul. The son of a prosperous Jewish farmer, he is surrounded by the calmness and serenity of a quiet country life, and for years together his mind experiences no other influences than those which come from the blue heaven, the verdant meadow, the godly example of his pious father, and the mild sunshine of a mother's love. In such scenes Elijah found him, busily plying his vocation, plowing in the field at

the head of his father's servants, his eye intent upon the furrow, and his thoughts for the future not reaching further, it may be, than the harvest-home. Possibly he thought, on springing from his couch that morning, that all his tact and determination would be needed to keep his companions at duty, and accomplish the needed amount of work by setting sun. The day would be a busy one. For the seed-time was quite at hand. There was no time to lose. Things ran a rapid course in that climate. They did not creep forward sluggishly as they do in ours. The twelve yoke of oxen might seem quite too few to enable him to take advantage of the season, and keep his affairs abreast of those of his neighbors.

THE PLOWMAN CALLED TO BE A PROPHET.

And so Elijah finds him with head bent downward, and his whole thoughts intent upon the matters depending upon his exertions, so thoroughly preoccupied, that he looks not up to salute the mysterious stranger, whose approach he does not even perceive. But in a moment all is changed. There is the flutter of a mantle, a momentary motion as the stranger passes, a motion little greater than is caused by the softest breeze which glides over the yielding tops of the tall grass, and bends the wild flowers upon their stalks; and yet it causes Elisha to leave his plow in the furrow, and follow the man who has brought an instant change upon his heart and the whole current of his life. Elijah has passed on with rapid stride. The young farmer overtakes him, and makes but one request, "Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee." Here was true filial affection, and yet obedience to the call of God. He was not ignorant of what the action of Elijah implied. The servants may have wondered, "what has come over our young master, who has not been wont to neglect his duty, and run after every passer-by?" But Elisha well understood that he was now

consecrated in a peculiar sense to the service of Jehovah. The slight outward sign had been accompanied by a powerful inward effect. The Spirit of the Lord, like the wind, bloweth where it listeth, and it had stirred the soul of Elisha to its profoundest depths.

His request was very different from that of the young man who long afterward said, "Lord, suffer me first to bury my father and my mother, and then will I come and follow thee." The latter pleaded to be let alone till his parents were dead—he wished to remain with them during the residue of their lives, and *then* obey the Lord's summons. Elisha asked only to explain his conduct, announce the call of the Lord, and say "farewell." What were the circumstances of the parting we are not informed. The narrative rolls on in its simple grandeur, not telling us whether his father and mother were reluctant to part with him, or piously and cheerfully suffered him to follow the bent of his destiny. And yet it is more than conjecture when we say that they submitted with alacrity to Jehovah's call. The slaying of a yoke of his father's oxen by Elisha to furnish an entertainment for the people, proves that he had his parents' consent to enter upon his new life. And so, the feast over, with a hearty concurrence, and yet with tearful eyes, they beheld the form of their son, with his mysterious companion, lessening in the distance and at length vanishing from their sight.

For at least eight years Elisha continued the attendant and disciple of Elijah, and during the whole of that time we hear nothing of him. It is not necessary to suppose that during this period, or afterward, there was no intercourse between him and his father's house. The silence upon this score is rather intended to show us that ordinary relations and interests had become secondary matters to him, and the narrative is confined to what bears directly upon his mission as a prophet. And it is reasonable to suppose that, although his name is not mentioned again until the removal of his master,

he was yet concerned in all those cases where the agency of any prophet other than Elijah was required. We must believe that while not yet "the prophet of Israel," he was subordinate and secondary only to him whom he had been chosen to succeed.

TRANSLATION OF ELIJAH.

But the day of the separation of master and servant drew near; and when at length it came there was a presentiment among the sons of the prophets of what was about to take place. The words of Elijah on certain occasions had implied that he was to be distinguished above others in the manner of his removal from the world; and we may well suppose that there was something in his appearance which produced the impression upon all who came near him that his destiny was to be different from that of other men, and that the time of some great event in his history was at hand. In making the circuit of the schools for the last time, he expressed a desire to proceed alone, and requested Elisha to remain behind. To one who loved ease more than duty this would have furnished a tempting opportunity of escaping a long and toilsome journey, with the blazing sun beating fiercely upon them all the way; but Elisha was determined not to lose a single opportunity of being with his master, and enjoying his instructions. Just as we fondly linger around the bed of a dying friend, anxious to catch every word that may fall from the lips which are soon to speak to us no more, so Elisha clings to his beloved master. Sweet, no doubt, was their intercourse, as they traveled on their way; and never probably did their hearts so burn within them as when they talked together during this closing journey. Perhaps the elder of the two spoke of the parting that was near, and of their meeting again in a better world, and gave his friend and brother many a word of pious counsel concerning his future course.

Presently Elijah asks him if he has any particular request

to make. "I pray thee," he replies, "let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." Conscious of his own weakness, and of the greatness of the work before him, he might well ask for the same spirit that had rested on Elijah, and that in a still larger measure. He felt that his work was great, and therefore he needed all the more grace. It was not that he desired to surpass in supernatural power all prophets that had gone before him. But in his humility and self-distrust, he believed a much larger measure of Divine grace and strength necessary to compensate his deficiencies, and to sustain that lofty character, which, now that his revered master was about to be withdrawn, would devolve upon one so unworthy as himself. The *form* of his request is explained by the fact that the heir was entitled to a double portion of his father's goods. As the first-born of Elijah's spiritual children, he asks a double portion of his spirit. Nor need we exclude the idea that, designated as he had been to the prophetic succession, selected as the heir to the office of Elijah, he wished to be assured of this now by some token that would be satisfactory, not only to himself but to others. Be this as it may, the same spirit which actuated Elijah was undoubtedly conferred in a large measure on his follower, producing similar abstractedness from the world, devotedness to the will and messages of the Most High, and fearlessness of the power of man.

The friends still go on, and talk together. They have many things to say. Very different are their prospects now. Indeed, except in devotion to the cause of God, they have been unlike in most respects all along; but they are most unlike now. The one has done his work, and the reward is before him—and such a reward! The other has his work to begin, and who can tell what vicissitudes of peril and persecution that work may bring with it? The one has the assurance of being taken to heaven without tasting death; his thoughts are already so brightly tinged with the hues of Paradise, that they scarcely belong to the earth. The other has before him *life*

with its stern duties; a solitary return to the place whence he has come; a thankless task and a dangerous mission; little hope of aid from the hand of man; at last, perhaps, not translation, but a bloody and cruel death. And well may he cry out for a double portion of the spirit of Elijah.

How majestic in its simplicity is the Scriptural narrative of the wonderful event which now happened! "And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." Elisha had only time to mark the unwonted display, when his friend was separated from him. St. Paul, long afterward, was struck blind in circumstances somewhat similar; no wonder if Elisha's eyes were dazzled with the excessive brightness! He looks again, after a brief moment, and the glowing chariot, its soul-rapt occupant, and its steeds of fire, are already far away into the visible heavens; and as he strains his upward gaze, he cries, "my Father, my Father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." Another instant, and all is lost to view, and only a luminous track, like the pathway of an angelic host, defines by its lingering glories the bright course by which the friend of his soul has entered into his rest.

And now the light is faded from the sky, and for a moment the light of all comfort has well-nigh deserted Elisha's heart. In the bitter impulse of his grief for the loss of one who had been so dear to him, and whom he considered indispensable to his country's welfare, "he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces." This paroxysm of sorrow, however, was but momentary; and "he took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him." That mantle was now his. The symbol and badge of the office he was thenceforward to fill, from it has been drawn the figure of speech which has passed into a proverb for the succession of the gifts of gifted men. It is one of the representations by which, in the Roman catacombs, the early Christians consoled them-

selves for the loss of their departed friends. With the mantle he descends once more to the Jordan stream, and wields it in his hand. The waters (so one version of the passage represents the scene) for a moment hesitate: "they divided not." He invokes the aid of Him, to whose Holy Name he adds the new epithet of "the God of Elijah;" and then the waters "part hither and thither," and he passes over and is in his own native region.

CEDARS OF LEBANON.

The sons of the prophets, on their distant watch, beheld this miracle; and the language of the narrative seems also to imply that they were impressed by something in the appearance of the prophet as he drew near them. "And when" they "saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him." That was well; but what follows

can only serve to give us a very dubious opinion of their claims upon our respect for aught but good intentions. Their device of sending forth certain strong men to search for Elijah lest the Spirit of the Lord might have taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley, comes upon us with a very unpleasant effect after the great event which had just taken place, and we cannot but contrast the feelings of Elisha, who knew that his master had been translated, with the crude, half-infidel notions of these men, who only dimly understood the transaction. He appears to have been so adverse to their proposal that he could only deign to forbid it in these brief and peremptory words, "Ye shall not send!" And we can scarcely doubt that there was something of the sternness of well-merited reproof in his looks, when, in the shame he felt at their urgency, he said, "Send!"

In the gardens and groves of Jericho, fresh from its recent restoration, he now takes up his abode. This city had lain desolate from the time when its walls were miraculously leveled with the ground, on the seventh day of its investiture by the host of Israel under Joshua, after they had just entered the Promised Land. A curse was pronounced upon him who should rebuild it; and for the space of four hundred and forty years no one dared to incur the threatened doom. But during the wicked reign of Ahab, amid the general apostasy which disgraced the land, there was one Hiel, a Bethelite, who presumed to set the curse at defiance, and according to the letter of the denunciation, his first-born died when he laid the foundation, and his youngest son, the last of his race, perished when he set up the gates. One is almost tempted to think that, amid the deplorable backslidings of the period, the dread denunciations connected with this city had been lost sight of; otherwise this man, when the doom foretold was being fulfilled with such fatal exactness, would have desisted from his impious undertaking ere the whole of the disaster which befell his family had been completed.

The city then was new, only fourteen years old; and the situation was pleasant, and is said to be so at the present day. It had also become the seat of one of the schools of the prophets, and was altogether a very desirable place to spend one's days in, with the fatal exception, that the water by which it was supplied was unwholesome, causing barrenness in the land, and the fruit trees to shed their untimely fruit. The people had recently heard of strange occurrences, and some of them had been eye-witnesses of the marvelous power of God. And now Elisha was in their neighborhood, and newly entered upon his prophetic mission, clothed with all the powers and endowments of Elijah, and much less terrible of aspect, and greatly more open to the advances of ordinary men. Was it not an excellent time to bespeak his good offices for their city? And so we have Elisha, like a great man as he was—the greatest then living—receiving a deputation. And very business-like was the statement that was made to him. Few words were spoken. And it may do us good to think of the faith of those men. "Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein," said the prophet. This was his first utterance after hearing the petition of his visitors. And what did they do? Did any of them turn round and question the utility of what he proposed? It is simply added that they brought it to him. *They* brought it; not Elisha's pupils, the sons of the prophets, but those men of the city, and thus did they testify their faith. And then they accompany Elisha, with his new cruse and handful of salt, to the fountain, a mile from the city. The spring was copious, but the quality of the water exceedingly bad, and how slender the preparation for the cure of a fountain large enough to drive mills! But there was no faltering, no misgiving, on the part of the prophet, nor yet on the part of those who were with him. And every eye was on him as he cast the salt into the bitter waters, and said, "Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land." A permanent cure was

effected, and to this day the spring is known to Jew and Christian as Elisha's Fountain, and the waters are beautifully clear and sweet and pleasant.

BEARS DESTROY THE REVILERS OF ELISHA.

The prophet, now fully entered upon his work, must leave for a time these grateful citizens, and visit Bethel, the seat of another of the schools of the prophets. Bethel, however, was

COAST SCENE.

a stronghold of idolatry, too, and we hear of no deputation sent out to welcome him, and bespeak his good offices. Something very different occurred. As he climbed the steep ascent, he was assailed by a rabble of boys with the cry "Go up, thou bald-head! go up, thou bald-head!" He turned and cursed them, and forthwith came two she-bears, and tore forty and two of them. Of this transaction Prof. F. D. Maurice says, "There are some deeds attributed to Elisha, I allude especially to the cursing of the children at Bethel, of which I have never heard any explanation that seemed to me satis-

factory. It is easy to dispose of such narratives by saying that they accord with the character of the Old Testament, though not of the New; but as I have not availed myself of that plea in other cases, I cannot in this. The Old Dispensation, I believe, reveals the same God as the New; less perfectly, no doubt, oftentimes through clouds which the risen sun has scattered, *but a God exhibiting righteousness, mercy, truth; demanding them of His creatures; cultivating them in all who submit themselves to Him and acknowledge Him as their Lord.* Nor can I merely resolve the difficulty by telling you, that if you accept the Bible as the word of God, you must take each passage of it as part of the whole, without asking any questions. The Bible itself forces us to ask a multitude of questions. Because I receive it as a revelation of God, I am bound to ask what it reveals concerning God. Because I receive it as a whole book, as a continuous revelation, I am bound to ask how one part of it accords with and interprets another. We must not fear to make this demand. It is distrusting the Bible, distrusting God, to have such a fear. And when we have not found the answer in any special instance, we should say so frankly. It cannot shake our faith to feel such ignorance and to confess it. *If there were a hundred passages which I was unable to interpret, but which puzzled me as to their moral significance, I should believe in the God whom the rest revealed to me, and ask Him to instruct me what I should think of them.* And this I believe in good time He would do, if I did not lose my hold upon that which I had, or attempt by hasty efforts of my own to grasp that which I had not. A man who takes this course is, I believe, in an infinitely safer moral condition, and shows far more reverence for the Bible, than one who takes the whole book nominally, upon trust or upon evidence, and does not care what the contents of it are, does not strive to bring them into connection with himself, does not desire to understand from them what God is. This story, however, is not one of a number

which I find it hard to reconcile with the general teaching of the book. I do not know that there is another in which I perceive the same difficulty, and for that very reason, instead of passing it over, or offering some solution of it, or on the other hand, pronouncing it an interpolation, when I have no proof to offer that it is one, I think it is a plain duty to profess that I do not understand it, though better persons may."

In quoting, we have emphasized portions of the above. It is the frank and honest utterance of an honest man. Other views may be stated thus: The Baal-worshipers of Bethel had known Elisha merely as the servant of Elijah—a mild, quiet, kindly man, who did his master's bidding, but of whom nobody stood in awe. He was such a man as the very children might take it upon them to insult. A very different man altogether was this from that stern prophet, who single-handed had proved an over-match for Baal and all his prophets, with the king and queen at their back, and of whom the very thunderbolts of heaven were the submissive servants. Had *he* been returning, the idolatrous matrons would have kept their children beside them, and the boldest of the men would have given place; but now "it was only Elisha who was coming; and it was a day of mirth, and the children might have a holiday; and if they amused themselves at the expense of the harmless visitant that was approaching, what matter." Possibly he had been the target of their rude scoffs before; and now his appearance was too ridiculous as he toiled up the hill, wearing the sheep-skin mantle of Elijah, and claiming to be his successor—his smooth close-trimmed locks contrasting with the long shaggy hair that streamed over the shoulders of his great and awful predecessor.

But there were more than children in the noisy throng that now surrounded the prophet, and burst into mocking laughter as they called him "roundhead." Children there doubtless were, as in every idle mob of young men, shouting and bawling, and imitating the vile conduct of their worthless elders.

Thus "they lisp the alphabet and learn the rudiments of vice." But the ringleaders of the set, the forty-two *of them* (of the company) who were destroyed were *men*. The term rendered *children*, is applied elsewhere to Ishmael, to Isaac, to Hamor, to Joseph, to Gehazi, and to many others, whether children, lads, youths or servants and soldiers—quite irrespective of age. And when the slaying is spoken of, the prefix "little" is dropped, and another word substituted of similar width of application with the first. And this crowd of rude boys, and insolent young men, with perhaps a sprinkling of those still more advanced in life, had "come out" deliberately "to meet" and insult the prophet, and break him down in the very beginning of his ministry. They did not happen to be at their sports outside the town when he passed. The mob was gathered on purpose. All their lives they had heard sneers and sarcasms levelled at the name and acts of Elijah. *Him*, surrounded as he was with terrors, they would not have dared thus to insult and abuse. But this new and youthful prophet, with his nicely shaven crown, and his meek and gentle ways—and yet wearing forsooth the mantle and claiming the authority of the terrible Elijah—they will crush him at the beginning! The reign of terror is over! "Go up, thou baldhead! Go up after your master. You say he is taken to heaven. Go up then after him, and we shall be well rid of you both!" The epithet that is applied to the prophet is a term of contempt, equivalent to calling him a mean and unworthy fellow, a social outcast. In this sense it is still used as a term of abuse in India and some other parts of the East, and is often applied to those who have ample heads of hair.

But God has said, "touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm." It became Him to vindicate the character and authority of His anointed prophet at the beginning of his high career; and it became Him to vindicate *His own* authority among a people governed by sensible dispensations of judgment and of mercy. As Elisha was to be signally the prophet

of love and tenderness and mercy, accessible to all classes of the people, sympathizing with all, and in God's name conferring benefits upon all, it was necessary that this public denial and ridicule of his claims should be efficiently met, and his authority as a prophet fully vindicated. And not only was this done in a way perfectly in accordance with God's method of dealing with men at that time—but even now, he who wishes to be only merciful, and to make his life a constant channel of mercy to the afflicted and the needy, may find it necessary sometimes to be severe with the wicked, lest in their malice they defeat his purposes of good, and altogether paralyze the arm of his mercy.

Let us learn from this narrative that we cannot despise God's people without despising Him, and we cannot slight them without incurring His anger. Let the young reflect deeply upon this passage. It is a bad thing to acquire a habit of ridiculing any one, and perhaps for some peculiarity of manner or appearance which evinces no fault of theirs, and of which they cannot rid themselves. Young people who are high-minded and generous will not appear to notice, much less endeavor to attract attention to the personal singularities of others. We need to cultivate respect for the aged, respect for those who are in authority, respect for those whose position is superior to our own; and we need to cherish a kindly feeling toward all, and especially toward those whose condition or circumstances may expose them to the sneers or ridicule of the ignorant or the foolish. Sometimes, too, it is necessary to punish those whose example for evil is contagious.

A WORD TO PARENTS.

Let parents consider the danger to which their ill-training exposes their children. They may not be eaten by wild beasts, but they are ready to fall into the jaws of a worse devourer. Your negligence, the evil that goes down to your offspring by blood and by example, your pernicious nurture,

are heaping up horrors for them—for yourselves, also—in eternity. The fruit may ripen in time. But though you taste it not in all its bitterness here, eternity is yours, theirs, and fruition must come then. The Hindoo mother used to cast her unconscious babe into the Ganges; it passed at once to the skies. Father, mother, you cast your child upon the smoothly-gliding stream of worldliness and folly, of sensuality and sin, and it is carried surely, swiftly down to the deep, dark, hopeless abyss below.

Neither Elisha nor any one connected with him seems to have suffered any further molestation in Bethel. Neither the priests of Baal, nor any of their disciples, nor any of the worshipers of the golden calves, found courage to foment any disturbance. No doubt they wished that Elisha and all who adhered to him should be expelled. But their spirit was crushed. So far as any overt act was concerned, their opposition was gone. Elisha came and went in peace. He had the freedom of the country. The way was open for him to train the sons of the prophets in cloistered halls, or to leave these sacred enclosures and wander upon missions of mercy, at the bidding of the Lord, through the whole extent of the kingdom of Israel. He was not hidden in torrent-beds, or secluded in mountain fastnesses, but dwelt in his own house in the royal city, or lingered amidst his disciples within the precincts of ancient colleges, embowered amidst the shades of the beautiful woods which overhung the crystal spring that is still associated with his name. In such scenes the main current of his life flowed serenely on, but that he made frequent excursions through the country is evident from the

CART.

language of the Shunammite, as well as other touches of the narrative.

One of the first places he visited was the mountain so intimately connected with Elijah. Perhaps he sought the top of Carmel to look off on the blue Mediterranean and the sweet valley of Jezreel, and breathe in more fully from their remembrances the spirit of his great predecessor and master.

But now the scene changes. We are called to take the field; and we shall find Elisha there. A camp is the scene of our narrative. Arms and banners surround us; the sound of horns and trumpets thrills in our ears. Moab, a tributary of Israel, has revolted,

> "And everywhere is hammer laid to hoof.
> Around the shop the steely sparkles fly,
> As for the steed is shaped the bending shoe,
> And plunged in water, the hot hiss is heard."

The cavalry is arming, the fighting-men are being numbered, for the tribute paid by Moab to the crown of Israel is heavy, and while intermitted, internal taxation must make up the deficiency, so this war to reduce the rebellious province is a popular one. Mesha, king of Moab, was a sheep-master, and rendered to the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs, and a hundred thousand rams, with the wool. The word translated sheep-master literally means "a marker," and comes to denote a shepherd, because of the necessity of marking the sheep to distinguish different flocks, a necessity all the greater in lands destitute of enclosures. Tribute, in ancient times, was usually paid in cattle, or in some product of the country. The Hebrews, however, were able to pay in precious metal, partly from the hoards of their kings, and partly from the facility they possessed of turning their produce into money in the Phenician markets.

Jehoram sends word to the king of Judah that he desires his assistance in the war. The answer is prompt: "I will go up; I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my

horses as thy horses." These kings were not only kinsmen, but they had a common interest; Moab was subject to the one, Edom to the other. It was necessary that any resistance to the Jewish domination should be promptly quelled. So the Israelites marched down through Judah's territory, and being joined by the forces of Jehoshaphat, proceeded round by the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, where being joined by the auxiliaries of Edom, they entered Moab on the south. Thus they avoided contact with the Syrians in the north, and were able also the better to keep the Edomites under their eye.

For seven days the combined armies penetrated a desolate and sterile country—a part of that desert which had witnessed the sufferings of their forefathers in the journey from Eygpt, and by the time they entered the land of Moab they were nearly consumed for want of water. The streams, which they expected to find flowing, were all dried up, and dry and stony beds mocked their parched lips. The armed men were fainting for thirst, the beasts of burden were perishing by the way. The weary stragglers in the rear, who came up faint and spiritless, were struck dumb with horror at the number of strong men whose corpses marked all the line of march—the vulture and other birds of prey hovering over them, or lazily rising up from their obscene banquet upon the dead, and filling every heart with forebodings. Even the boldest were losing hope, while the deceitful appearances of the desert mocked them with anticipations which soon proved groundless, for instead of the shade of palm-groves and water in abundance, there were burning sands, parched-up spots of pasture, and blazing sunbeams borne on heated gusts of air, which smote them like the blast of a furnace of fire.

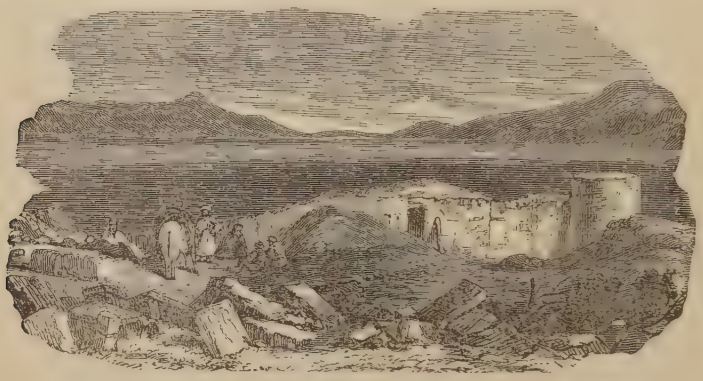
And now the faint-hearted Jehoram is on the point of giving up all for lost. He says, "The Lord has brought us here to slay us." But Jehoshaphat asks if there is not a

prophet of the Lord in the camp. He is precise in his inquiry. It is a "prophet of the LORD" that he wants. Jehoram might have plenty of a different stamp. The king of Judah wants no Baal-worshiper, but one commissioned by Jehovah. And such a one is at hand. Unknown to the kings, moved by the impulse of a higher master than they, Elisha has joined the army and marched with the immense host. By the mandate of the Lord, he is there to accomplish a mighty deliverance. Apprised of his presence, the kings do not send for him, but in all their royal state, go down to his tent. Most men would have been overwhelmed by such a visitation—three crowned heads! But not at all abashed by their presence, the prophet, albeit a mild-mannered man, rebukes the son of Ahab as sternly as Elijah himself could have done. "What have I to do with thee; go to the prophets of thy father and mother." And the king replies in a deprecating tone, "Nay, but the Lord has called us three kings to deliver us into the hand of Moab." Then Elisha said, "Were it not for Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee; but now bring me a minstrel." Most susceptible to external influences, he needed to calm the perturbations of his spirit, to bring his soul into a fit frame for receiving the communications he sought from heaven. He needed that his spirit should be borne upon the wings of harmonious sound into that Divine Presence which no dissonance can approach. Nor was the soothing influence of sweet sounds for him alone. The kings, as they listened, though less impressionable than Elisha, could not but come under the strange and subtile power of this most spiritual of earthly influences, and thus be prepared to receive in a right spirit the directions they sought. They had not long to wait. As with rapt ardor the minstrel swept the strings, the Divine influence came down upon the prophet's mind, and the last note had scarcely died away when he spake. "Make this valley full of ditches, for thus saith the Lord, you shall

not see wind or rain, and yet this valley shall be filled with water, that you and your beasts may drink." Obedient to the Divine command, soon thousands of men were at work, scooping out wide and deep trenches in the dry torrent-beds of the valley. And some of them doubtless went to their toil impatient that in their weakness and weariness labor should be added to their thirst. But now night fell over all, and the panting host lay down to sleep. And while all was quiet in the camp, and the night air was stirred by no breeze, and no signs of rain were visible in the sky, by the ordination of God, the distant mountains have attracted the clouds, and a fearful storm is raging, and torrents of rain are falling, and the waters are already making their way toward the tired unconscious host. And when the trumpet has roused them from their slumbers, at the moment when they are offering the morning sacrifice, the torrent comes rushing from the way of Edom, and fills all the ditches, and there is abundance of water for all the confederated armies.

And now the Moabites appear upon a mountain overlooking the encampment. They approach from a direction opposite to that whence the waters have come. They know of no storm, and looking down upon the plain, the sun shining full in their faces, and giving a reddish tinge to the water in the trenches, they jump to the conclusion that the allies have fallen out, and that this is the blood of the battle. Under this delusion they hasten to plunder the camp which they suppose forsaken, but find it full of living and refreshed men, whose swords soon make the visionary blood a truth. The invaders gain an easy victory, roll back the shattered forces of the enemy, pursue them over their own soil, beat down their fortified cities, lay waste the whole country, and give a literal fulfillment to the words of the prophet, "Ye shall smite every fenced city and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and shall stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones."

At length the king of Moab is shut up in his strong city of Kir-hareseth. He makes a bold attempt to force his way through the investing forces, at the head of seven hundred resolute men. He is repelled and driven back into the city. This seems the last of human resources, and nothing is left him but a solemn appeal to his gods for deliverance. The emergency is great. Not only the welfare, but the very existence of his house and nation, is at stake. He therefore conceives that the blood of bulls and of goats will not suffice for the greatness of the occasion. It demands the most precious and costly offering known to paganism, the life of a



PLAIN AND LAKES OF TIBERIAS.

man; and that of no common man, but of him whose life is most precious to the king himself, and to the state—even his own son, his eldest son, who should succeed him on the throne Accordingly, he offers up his first-born publicly, in the sight of all the armies, upon the wall. Horror-struck at the terrible spectacle, indignant that Mesha should have been driven in his despair to such a dreadful resource, weary now of fighting and destroying, the allies raise the siege and depart. The object of the campaign is attained. Moab is forced to return beneath the scepter of Israel.

Human sacrifices, alas, have been far from rare in the annals

of heathenism. The perverse ingenuity of man has reasoned that whatever is most costly and precious must needs be most acceptable as an offering to the gods; and hence the life of man, the noblest of creatures, must be the most valuable of all offerings. And the more illustrious, the more pure or exalted the person who is offered up as a sacrifice, the more likely are the stern powers that rule the destinies of man to be gratified, soothed and rendered propitious. Hence the lives of the most pure, the most beautiful, the most high-born—children, virgins and noble youths, have been considered the most splendid and effectual sacrifices. Readers of the Greek drama will recall the offering up of Iphigenia as narrated in the tragedy of Æschylus. The sacrifice of the king's only daughter was declared by the priest to be the sole means of propitiating the angry goddess, who, by storms and adverse winds, prevented the Argive fleet from sailing.

"The sons of Atreus, starting from their thrones,
Dashed to the ground their scepters, nor withheld
The bursting tears that dew'd their warrior cheeks;
And thus exclaiming spoke the Elder King:

'O heavy, fatal doom! to disobey!
O heavy, fatal doom! my child to slay—
My child! the idol treasure of my house!
Must I, her father, all bedabbled o'er
In streaming rivers of her virgin gore,
Stand by the altar with polluted hands?
O woe! woe! woe!'"

But when all was ready, the mailed chiefs who stood around

"Heard in silence stern
Cries that called a father's name,
And set at naught prayers, cries and tears,
And her sweet virgin life and blooming years."

Then followed a solemn prayer, during which the victim sinks to the ground in a swoon; and at length, on the word being given by her father, the priests lift her up,

"And bear her to the altar dread,
Like a young fawn or mountain kid;
Then round her beauteous mouth they tie
Dumb sullen bands to stop her cry,
Lest aught of an unholy sound
Be heard to breathe those altars round,
Which on the monarch's house might cast a spell."

THE POT OF OIL.

From scenes of blood the narrative carries us to a quiet home in Israel. We enter a humble cottage, the habitation of "a woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets." The naked walls, the barely furnished shelves, the poor little table with the wooden bench before it, and the pallet of straw in the unfurnished chamber, tell us plainly enough the poverty of the occupants. And we read the same story in the pale and care-worn visage of the poorly dressed woman who comes to meet us, with her eyes red with weeping. Her husband, the crown of her house, has long slept beneath the grassy hillock. An early death has taken him away. And his grave is ever wet with her tears. Still she hopes in the mercy of the Lord. She knows that He loves her, and has in reserve for her a palace, a crown of righteousness, white raiment, and who can tell what besides?

But now a fresh blow falls upon her. She experiences what it is to fall into the hands of unmerciful man, and this becomes the bitterest and harshest drop in the cup of her suffering. Her husband, on his dying bed, had only been able to commend her to the paternal protection of the Almighty. He left her in the deepest poverty—the little hut no doubt already mortgaged—and with debts weighing her down, and no means or prospect of paying them. How these debts arose, an ancient Hebrew tradition tells us. According to this, the poor woman is the widow of Obadiah, who, in the murderous persecution of the prophets by Jezebel, hid a hundred of them in caves and fed them with bread and water. When Jezebel learned this, she had him removed from office. He then took

up his abode in one of the schools of the prophets, in order to support himself by the labor of his hands, and to live entirely to the Lord and His cause. The debt which he left behind him proceeded from the expense of supporting the hundred brethren. He had hoped gradually to liquidate it from his income as an officer of the royal household, but when dismissed, in the impoverished circumstances in which he was placed, he was able to pay only a part of it.

Such is the ancient legend; and one thing we know, the poor widow is now in the utmost perplexity, and oppressed by a cruel creditor. She has already stripped her house of everything that is not indispensable, in order to satisfy him; and the sons of the prophets, poor themselves, have contributed according to their ability. But the sum is not made up, and her children are about to be made slaves. This was according to the law, not merely of the Hebrews, but of most ancient nations. Parents, in their poverty, sold their offspring; and creditors seized the children of their debtors as freely as their cattle and movables. The right in the one case grew out of the other; the right of the creditor from that of the father. There is no instance in any nation of a creditor being empowered to seize children, where the parent himself did not possess the right of selling them.

As the prophet was passing along the highway, the woman cried to him. Had Elisha come to be followed by a crowd in his progress through popular places? Yes, what more natural? A man who had had three kings bringing their humble petition to his tent; one who had done many wonders, and not long previous had saved a whole army from destruction, may well be supposed to have had his footsteps followed and his words and actions scanned, and his helping hand requested by not a few. When the tidings spread that Elisha was coming, there would be forthwith a growing assemblage of old and young, bent upon seeing the man of whom such strange things were told, and to whom were ascribed such

wonderful powers. And the poor lone widow could only expect to be heard by crying from the outside of the throng But amid all the din and babel of the great concourse—amid urgent petitions for his influence with the great, and the noisy expostulations of those who wished to be forward but were kept back—the widow's cry of distress reached the innermost circle, and fell upon the ear of him whom all had come forth to see. One may fancy the prophet standing still, arrested

DAMASCUS.

by such a cry of genuine earnestness and sharp affliction as could not have been counterfeited. And was there not something familiar in the tones of that voice? The words of the narrative seem to imply that Elisha had known the woman and her husband. He tells her what to do. But first he inquires what she has in the house. She had applied to him for help—as people ought always to feel free to apply to the ministers of God in temporal as well as spiritual distresses. She had opened her heart to him, and he enters at once with full compre-

hension and sympathy into her case. "You tell me you are involved—a creditor is driving you to the wall—now what are your assets?" "And she said, Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house save a pot of oil." And now, as so often in the miraculous interventions of the sacred history, something right at hand is made the starting-point or key-note of the miracle. The prophet takes *what she has*, and uses it to accomplish his purpose—like a good financier, skillfully turning to account whatever she has in stock, and making preparations to meet her liabilities. He tells her to borrow all the vessels she can, and out of her little pot there shall come oil enough to fill them. And so she goes to work herself, and sends round her sons borrowing—and we may be sure those boys were lively that day, and very bold and brazen-faced borrowers, when they knew that on their success depended their own exemption from slavery. If they got vessels enough they would be free—otherwise they would be sold into bondage. They would visit every house in the neighborhood, far or near, and take no refusal.

And now the floors of the cottage are covered with vessels, and the miracle begins. What a moment of rejoicing when the golden stream commences to flow! As the mother pours, vessel after vessel is brought by the sons, and almost instantly filled. It is as if a fountain of oil were bubbling up in the pitcher. When the sons place one pan or jar under the yellow stream, they must have another at hand, for the oil flows on without cessation. And every filled vessel, and every drop of the flowing oil, represents some portion of the price to be paid for their deliverance; it is equivalent to striking off a link from the chain of their servitude. But all that they can perceive of the miracle is, that so long as there is an empty vessel there is ample store of oil to fill it—all coming apparently from the original slender store; but the manner of increase as imperceptible as that of the grain, which grows up by night and by day, whilst the eye

which notes the progress can discern nothing of the process of growth.

And so the oil approaches the brim of the last vessel, and the mother calls out, "Bring me yet a vessel!" And the sons reply, "There is not a vessel more." And "then the oil stayed." And beside herself with astonishment and thankfulness and joy, the widow runs to the man of God, and almost breathless with exultation tells him what great and glorious things she has experienced. And he says, "Go, sell the oil, and pay the debt, and live thou and thy children upon the rest." And so her deliverance is accomplished; and the hour of her extremity proves only the time of God's opportunity. And so it is ever. God is the God of the fatherless and the widow. It is His office to succor the needy and the distressed. Who art thou, O widow, O suffering one, whose eye is glancing over this page? "Hope thou in God." Your heart is anxious about your children. Now if I were to tell you what is in store for them, you would not believe it. Little do you know of the houses which may even now be building for them; or the warehouses which know them not as yet, but which one day may call them master; or the broad lands lying asleep under the stars, whilst you lie sleepless upon your pillow, which yet may come to be theirs by ways so unexceptionable that no one would need to blush under the sunshine in calling them by their name.

But should God in His wisdom not bestow these things upon your children, if you are training them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, one thing He will not withhold from them. He says, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed and my blessing upon thy offspring." That is better than if He had promised to pour upon them riches or honors. If they possess His Spirit, they shall have that which will enable them to bear life's burdens and discharge its duties, and that Spirit will guide them safely to the heavenly home where you and they shall meet to part no more forever!

And thus, as the narrative progresses, we see how God intervenes, not for nations only, but for individuals. The kingdom of Israel, the great American people, may be dear to him, but not dearer than the humblest believer. The mightiest concerns of empires are held in His grasp, but no creature is so insignificant as to be beneath His notice. Be your lot the most obscure, Jesus with His human heart and His Divine compassion is regarding you, and all the treasures of Omnipotence are pledged for your security from real harm. What seems to be evil may come nigh you, but the event will prove that it is only good disguised, and the light affliction which is but for a moment will work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

THE SHUNAMMITE.

Near the center of the Promised Land, a few days' journey upward from Jerusalem, a plain stretches itself from the sea-coast to the vine-crowned banks of the Jordan. It is extensive, interrupted only by single eminences, and partially intersected by the little river Kishon, and is a district, which, as regards fertility of soil, luxuriance of vegetation, and agreeableness of climate, has scarcely its equal on the face of the earth. Here, in the pleasing vicinity of evergreen olive woods, and waving fields of grain, we find the quiet, pleasant and prosperous town of Shunem, four miles from the royal residence of Jezreel. It is an aristocratic place, and the Shunammite is of high family and large wealth, but she has a humble, godly heart. She recognizes Elisha as God's minister when it is very unfashionable and somewhat hazardous to do so. Jehoram's court, with his mother Jezebel to set the fashions, is not a very encouraging neighborhood to piety. But this noble woman greets Elisha from a pure heart of sympathy, when the holy man on his circuits passes through Shunem. And it is a greeting of the Gaius style. He must come in and take dinner. And she tells

him, Whenever you come this way make our house your home. "And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread."

THE PROPHET'S CHAMBER.

But the good woman is not satisfied with this. Her husband must give his consent to build a fine apartment on the top of the house, furnished with every convenience of the day, on purpose for the prophet's use. "Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick; and it shall be when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither." And now it is a very common thing to see the prophet on the streets of Shunem, on his travels through the land, visiting the schools of the prophets, or on his way to his mountain closet—the summit of Carmel—for a season of repose and converse with God. Dusty and travel-stained, an itinerant and a missionary, no unworthy forerunner of Him "who went about doing good." he from time to time appears and whosoever meets him stands still, and with reverence salutes him. Even the children, on perceiving him, cease their play until he has passed by them, or else hasten toward him, and stretch out their little hands to him. With paternal warmth he returns the salutation right and left, and passes on to a house, which by its delightful situation and friendly exterior, distinguishes itself from the other habitations of the place—the abode of the "great woman" of our narrative. She meets him at the door, and with reverential kindness bids him welcome, and as often as he lodges there, it seems to this estimable woman and her family as if the little edifice has suddenly become a temple and a sanctuary—the house of God, and the very gate of heaven. Every countenance looks more friendly. They know that the holy man stands in a more wondrous, close, and intimate connection with Jehovah than themselves; and often it seems as if Jehovah has taken up His abode with them.

THE GRATEFUL GUEST.

How comfortable is this for Elisha! Ministers are not often provided for so bountifully. It is well they are not, for not being all Elishas, they might grow lazy and worldly with such luxuries about them. Elisha feels grateful to this great-hearted saint, shining like a star of heaven in the pandemonium of Jezebel. She has entertained him with such kind and liberal hospitality, she has evinced such a consideration and concern for his habits and tastes, that he feels bound to make himself useful in any way he can to those by whom he has been so kindly treated. The woman may feel herself honored, and may find her own reward, in attending to the wants of one whom she perceives to be a man of God; but it behooves Elisha to show at least a desire to make some return. Accordingly he suggests to her that he might obtain promotion for her husband in the court or in the army, and then she could glitter by the very side of the throne. Since the wonderful victory over the Moabites, the prophet is in great credit at court, the king feels under obligations to him, and an intercession on his part with Jehoram or his minister, would certainly not be without effect. "Behold thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, "I dwell among mine own people." What a beautiful answer! She had no wish to change her situation. Her position and wealth brought her necessarily in contact with the wicked royalty of Israel. But she wished to see no more of it than she must. Her soul abhorred it. Even though the Lord's prophet proposed it, she would none of it. Evil is to be rejected, even though an angel offer it.

The house lacks the greatest ornament. Chandeliers and couches and curtains are there, but there's no dear little child. Oh! if she had a child, what a joy would enter her heart! Gehazi, the scamp, suggests the thought to Elisha. The Lord

makes His mercy to run along strange channels. A lying thief like Gehazi may be used of God to carry a blessing. Elisha calls the woman and promises this boon. She is almost Sarah over again at the news, but not quite. There is faith in her answer. That heart of hers tasted a new joy when she heard the baby cry, and the little treasure was nestled in her bosom.[1]

The example of the hospitable Shunammite explains to us the words of our Lord Jesus: "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward. And he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." If we are able to perceive the Divine radiance shining through the mean attire and lowly form which His children wear, if we show any kindness or affection, be it little or much, to one of His people, the Lord will reward us for it, and will bestow upon us something of that fullness of heavenly blessing which He promises to pour upon the righteous.

DEATH AND LIFE.

The years pass on, the world's affairs run their course, and the man of God when he comes to Shunem, turns in with something of a home feeling, and occupies his chamber upon the wall. But life must have its storms, and our sharpest trials spring sometimes out of the chief sources of our earthly happiness, and so it happens with the Shunammite. Her child is well-grown, and has put on now those winning ways, which a stranger may overlook, but to which a mother's heart is so susceptible. He is able to run alone, and can be trusted to make his way by himself to familiar places. It is a bright summer morning, and he asks to go to his father,

1 Crosby.

who is in the field with the reapers. The mother gives her permission, and sunshine is in her heart as she watches him along the path, and pictures his bright face among the golden sheaves. But her joy is soon checked. No sooner has he reached the field than he is smitten with the fierce rays of the sun. He cries to his father, "My head, my head!" Occupied with his harvest, and apparently regarding the illness as slight—perhaps, too, a man of cold and sordid temper, the father bids a servant take the child to his mother. Instead of clasping him in his arms and carrying him to the house himself, he does not even go near him all the day.

But who can tell the alarm of the poor mother, as her little boy is brought to her, pale as a corpse, already half insensible, moaning with pain, and more dead than alive! With a wild cry of anguish she snatches him from the arms of the servant, lays him in her lap, and seeks to warm him in her bosom, and while the field rings with the merry laugh and careless song of the reaper, she sits at home with a heavy heart looking down sadly upon the little one's distress, stirring the golden hair upon his throbbing temples with her sighs. And so the hours of the morning wear away. The joy of harvest is without, but the desolation of winter reigns within. At noon he dies in her arms. For a space she holds him in her impassioned embrace, then turns in her grief to God. "She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him and went out." He was God's gift, given through the promise and the prayer of the prophet, and to God she surrenders him, and in this act, too, still links him with her beloved and honored guest, Elisha. But mingling with her devout submission is the hope that he who gave will restore. Through Elijah the widow's son had been raised from the dead, and might not her darling be restored by Elisha! With God all things are possible, and she will try. But still she utters no complaint There is no repining, no questioning the goodness of God

To every inquiry she answers, "It is well." The Lord gave her a child when she expected none. He has reclaimed the boon He lent, and her heart is ready to break. Looking upon her sorrow, in His infinite goodness He may give her back her dead. The little chamber, consecrated to pious uses, given to God and His prophet without desire of earthly reward, may witness another miracle like that which in the last generation gladdened the humble cottage of the widow of Zarephath. But in any event, "It is well." The Judge of all the earth doeth right. Jehovah gives and takes away, and blessed be the name of Jehovah.

She sends to her husband for an attendant to go with her to the prophet. He does not understand why she wishes to go at such a time, when it is neither Sabbath nor new-moon, not the usual season for religious worship, but he puts no hindrance in her way. She hastens to depart. Elisha is away at Mt. Carmel, sixteen miles across the plain. With such driving as she used, she would be there in two hours. "And she said unto her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee." When the prophet saw her coming, he said to Gehazi, "Run to meet her, and say, Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well. And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet; but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone, for her soul is vexed within her; and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me. Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?" I was contented in my desolation, poor in affection, sitting in a childless house, no childish feet pattering through the halls, no childish voice echoing in the chambers. Your promise caused a new hope to dawn upon me, and its fulfillment opened a fountain of joy in my heart. Was all this only the worst and most cruel of deception, exciting hopes but to blast them in

death, and giving me to taste of joys unknown before, only that the cup half-drained might be dashed from my lips, and my soul remanded to a solitude more cheerless and more desolate than that in which I dwelt before.

The appeal fell upon no unfeeling ear or callous heart. The sound of her voice had not time to die upon the air, till Gehazi was despatched with the wonder-working staff, with strict orders to delay not by the way. "Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thy hand, and go back to Shunem. Hasten, and stay not on the way. If thou meet any one, salute him not, and if any salute thee answer him not again. Ascend into the upper chamber, and lay my staff upon the boy's face." Elisha had faith that the God of Elijah would hear his prayer, and give back the child's life. Some outward sign, however, was necessary to connect the restoration of life with the power of God working through his agency, and thus show the miraculous nature of the transaction. The use of means of some kind characterizes all the miracles of Scripture. The means employed may be such as can have no natural effect in producing the result; and of course this must always be so in the raising of the dead; but they must be used as a test of faith, and to show the connection of the result with the agency of the prophet or wonder-worker; and thus establish the truth of his claim that what is done is effected by the power of God, working outside of natural methods.

But while the swift runner is sent with the staff, Elisha himself follows after, and meets Gehazi returning with the announcement that his efforts are unavailing: "The child is not awaked" Then the prophet "went in, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord, and he went up and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm." "Then he returned, and walked in the

house to and fro." We may imagine him traversing the house, first in one direction and then in another, from room to room, forgetting himself, with folded hands and looks directed upward. O arduous conflict! He wrestles for the life of the child. His weapons are his fervent ejaculations, his sighs and his tears. Now, indeed, heaven suffers violence and is taken by force. Prayer alternates with tender, earnest efforts for the restoration of the boy. He hastens back to the chamber, throws himself upon the corpse, clings to it afresh, entreats and wrestles with such importunity as if he had really resolved to overcome God, or die at His feet.

And now the boy shows first one sign and then another of returning life, and at last opens his eyes. Elisha sends for the Shunammite, and bids her take up her son. "And she went in and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son and went out." Her faith was rewarded. Her husband seems to have been still engaged among his reapers, sharing neither her agony nor her joy.

THE LAND RESTORED.

Five years perhaps had passed away, when Elisha said to the Shunammite, "Arise and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn; for the Lord hath called for a famine, and it shall also come upon the land seven years." And so the woman lived for seven years in the country of the Philistines, and returning found that her house was occupied, and her lands in the possession of another. So she went forth to cry unto the king. Where the prophet was, we are not informed. But Providence slept not, although His minister might be absent.

It seems that Jehoram, in his better moods, was desirous to gain intelligence about the wonders done by Elisha. And one day he said to Gehazi, "Tell me, I pray thee, of all the great things that Elisha hath done." So Gehazi told him of the raising of the dead, and as he was finishing his account, the

woman herself drew near and cried to the king for her house and her land. And Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, this is the woman and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life." Greatly struck with the whole circumstances, the king, for once at least, commanded an act of justice to be done. Having heard from her own lips the confirmation of what Gehazi had told him, he appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, "Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land until now." Thus the woman was reinstated in her possessions, and we hear of her no more.

LONG-EARED SYRIAN GOAT.

DEATH IN THE POT.

"And Elisha came again to Gilgal, and there was a dearth in the land, and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him; and he said unto his servant, set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets."

The little town of Gilgal lay in the lower provinces of Israel, and was the site of a flourishing school of the prophets, in the midst of a race much infected with idolatry. In tracing the life of Elijah, we accompanied him from Gilgal, by Bethel and Jericho, to his triumphal car, and crowning festival in the desert. How have the plains of Israel changed their appearance since then! Who could recognize the beautiful country we saw upon that journey! How has it become a barren waste! Then we beheld waving grain-fields as far as the eye

could reach. Heavy-laden wagons, breaking down almost with the produce of the harvest, passed before us on every road. The orange trees, as well as the vines, were scarcely able any longer to support the burden of their luxuriant fruit. In short, we met with nothing but marks of blessing and abundance in every direction, and there was scarcely any end, either day or night, to the exultings of the reapers and the binders of the sheaves, and the rejoicing of the vintagers upon the hills. But now a dreadful dearth has fallen upon the land. The fields lie scorched as if under a curse. The sickles hang rusting upon the walls, and famine already has taken hold of a great part of the population. But Elisha continued to make his circuit. He was an itinerant; and probably he performed the whole of the weary way on foot, with no other support than the humblest fare, no other aid than the staff in his hand, no other shelter than Elijah's mantle, and no other companion than Gehazi his attendant and disciple. So Elijah had traveled before him; so a greater than either of these great prophets afterward traveled the self-same districts of country, weary and foot-worn, resting not from His labors till He breathed out His life on the cross.

Arrived at Gilgal, Elisha's little flock present a mournful aspect. They have consumed the last remains of their limited stock of provisions. Their gardens are empty, as well as their purses. The effects of the dearth are visible on the pale faces that look up to the prophet as they gather about him to receive his instructions. And he is touched with sympathy for the pangs of hunger that have blenched so many cheeks which lately glowed with the hues of health, and quenched the light of so many ardent eyes, and caused so many in the morn of life to appear as if they had suddenly grown old. He speaks, consoles, encourages, and they eagerly feed upon the words of life that flow from his lips in a refreshing stream. They feel happy in his company; he is like a bright and genial star, which has arisen in the night of

their affliction. The shadows of care disperse before his cheering discourse, as fogs before the rays of the sun, and every eye again looks bright as he opens sweet vistas, unknown and peaceful retreats, in the temple of the Scriptures the grand and far-reaching promises and covenanted blessings of Jehovah.

And now, having given their hearts a different tone, he says in a cheerful mood to his servant, "Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets." Compelled as they were now to forage in the fields, under the hedges, behind the fences, for herbs that were even but half eatable, one had gone out and found a wild vine, covered with beautiful egg-shaped fruit, which he took to be wild gourds. He returns with his prize, and empties his blanket full of these deadly vegetables (doubtless the colocynth, still to be found in that locality) into the great caldron. But no sooner have they begun their meal, than the presence of something noxious is detected, and they cry out, "O thou man of God, there is death in the pot!" But the frugal little feast was only momentarily interrupted, for Elisha said, "Then bring meal. And he cast it into the pot. And he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot." There could be nothing in the meal to neutralize the poison, and make the food wholesome and palatable. It was the outward sign of a supernatural effect, powerless in itself, but clothed with Divine efficiency when coupled with faith in God and used in obedience to His will, and in dependence upon His strength. And thus a dish of salt is sufficient to remove from a whole district the desolation of a thousand years. A spray broken from a tree makes the bitter fountains of Marah sweet and potable. A little clay, mixed with spittle, restores sight to a man born blind, and a drop of oil brings health to the dying. The healing power of every medicine depends upon one ingredient, which must not be wanting, and that is the blessing of God.

But the means employed in these miracles are worthy of our closest scrutiny. They are little links, connecting the ordinary course of nature with the marvelous interpositions of God, and manifestations of His power. They do not make the supernatural less wonderful, but they make it more instructive and more interesting. They afford a revelation of God's character, whilst letting forth a coruscation of His power; and they are gentle inclines by which, from the level of every-day, we may ascend toward the throne of an ever-wakeful, ever-working Omnipotence,—gangways or bridges by which our feeble steps may cross over from the frail barque of our own existence—circumscribed, mist-bounded—to the ever-adjacent mainland of the infinite and the eternal.

The children of the prophets did not stumble at the trifling nature of the remedy used by Elisha. They knew that it is God's method to make inferior things the vehicles of His miraculous power. He that despises that which is inconsiderable, is not fit for the kingdom of God, where the King and Mediator is crowned with thorns; where blood is the propitiation; and where fishermen and publicans appear as the officers and interpreters of the Supreme Majesty. The faith of the disciples of Elisha was not put to shame. Partaking of the food there was "no harm" in it. And so faith is always crowned. The angel of the covenant dislocated Jacob's thigh, but not his arms, by which he held him fast and clung round his neck. And spiritually, believers ten thousand times repeat this miracle in their own experience. Abiding in Christ, for them there is nothing any longer destructive, baneful, or soul slaying. Sin is a deadlier poison than colocynth, but its power is neutralized and overcome in the members of Christ. O blissful security of God's children, against whom every arrow is blunt, every sword is notched; and that which seeks their injury, promotes their salvation against its will—even the devil performs for them only the office of an apprentice

in the dispensary of the Great Physician, in which he prepares salutary powders, and concocts beneficial mixtures.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

From the next incident that is recorded it would seem that the famine still continued. "And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, give unto the people, that they may eat! And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people that they may eat; for thus saith the Lord, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof. So he set it before them, and they did eat and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord." This miracle reminds us of similar passages in the life of Christ, the feeding of the multitudes in the desert. It teaches us that although our portion of worldly goods be but small, we should not refuse to share what we have with the needy. It shows us the blessedness and omnipotence of faith.

COLOCYNTH.

The following incident is narrated of the Rev. Mr. Henke. A Christian friend came one day to see him, and was asked to dine. When the bell rang at noon, the servant passed through the room several times with an anxious countenance, in order unobservedly to beckon her master out. The minister only reminded her that it was time to lay the cloth. She was perplexed and went out, but immediately returned, and re-

quested her master to step out for a moment. "Sir," said she, "don't you know that we have scarcely even a crust in the house, and you sent your last penny to a sick person to-day!" "Ah," rejoined Henke, with a smile, "is that all you have to say to me? Lay the cloth as usual. It will be time enough for the meat when we sit down to the table." And so the table is spread. Dishes, plates, spoons and forks are duly placed. "Let us take our seats," said the host, with a cheerful countenance. They sit down to the empty table, and the worthy child-like man offers up a prayer, in which mention is made of the fowls of the air, the young ravens, and many other things. And on his saying "amen!" the door-bell is rung. The servant hastens out, and there is a basket with abundance of food. A neighbor had felt constrained to send it. Calmly, and as if nothing uncommon or unexpected had occurred, the good man ordered the dishes to be placed on the table, and looking smilingly at the astonished housekeeper, said, "Well have you still anything to object to our kind entertainer?"

But we must not imitate the conduct of Henke or Elisha, until we have their faith. It is easy to order the cloth to be laid, but nothing is accomplished by that alone. One thing, however, is for us all to do; while we seek in the sweat of our brow to earn our bread, to trust unfalteringly in that kind Providence who finds the bird his food, and is alike the support of the worm that crawls in the dust, the insect that floats in the sunbeam, and the seraph that burns before His throne.

THE HEBREW MAID.

In one of the frequent forays which marauding companies of Syrians made into the land of Israel for purposes of insult and plunder, they carried away captive a little maiden, who appears to have belonged to one of the few families that, in the midst of wide-spread degeneracy, had remained faithful to the God of their fathers. Perhaps in the division of the spoils

on their return, she had been allotted to the Syrian household in which we find her. Or we may imagine the beautiful and timid captive exposed for sale in the crowded slave-market of Damascus, and in this way becoming a domestic attendant upon the wife of Naaman the Syrian.

This man, distinguished for personal valor and for signal military successes which had made the whole land his debtor, was the commander-in-chief of the armies of Syria, and the confidential adviser of his king, to whom he stood nearest in rank and power. It is natural to picture him as living in a palace, in the midst of one of those orchards of apricots, pomegranates and other trees which, for three thousand years, have made Damascus the garden of the East. But what em bittered all his enjoyments, and withered all the beauty of the paradise by which he was surrounded, was the fact that he was afflicted with the terrible and loathsome disease of leprosy, so that, as good Bishop Hall has quaintly said, "the basest slave in all Syria would not have changed skins with Naaman, had he gotten his office to boot."

He appears to have been a man of much natural generosity, and to have treated the little captive girl so kindly as to have gradually won her confidence and awakened her sympathy. We may conceive her to have looked on at first with affectionate but silent interest, to have seen the agents of superstition trying all their charms, and the native physicians exhausting all their skill upon her master in vain; for still the fatal malady, which her Hebrew education had taught her to regard with peculiar dread and aversion, made steady progress, consuming his strength, and "wasting his beauty like a moth," and threatening soon to turn that splendid mansion into a house of mourning. Waiting from day to day upon her mistress, she read in her countenance the darkening signs of anxiety and sorrow; and unable at length to repress the thoughts which had often risen in her mind, with affectionate artlessness she one day dropped the kind hint, "Would

God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy."

Thus spake the little Hebrew maid. From the first mention of her case she is an object of interest, but how much more when she has opened her lips! Few were her words, but they stamp the goodness of her heart. And who shall tell how deeply the absence of this little maid was lamented, whose nature was so loving that she could thus feel for him who held her enslaved away so far from her native land and all her heart's delight? Perhaps a father or a mother bewailed her loss, and prayed that she might yet be restored; and little brothers and sisters wondered why she, the bright-eyed one who had led their dances, and whose voice had ever been to them as the sweetest music, was no longer heard or seen; whilst at the mention of her name her father turned his head in silent anguish, and her mother's eyes were filled with scalding tears. And many a time her thoughts must have turned to the pleasant scenes from which she had been torn away. That gentle heart could have been no stranger to home-sickness, and yet it was not easy for the natural hope and buoyancy of so young a heart to continue habitually repressed, and like the caged bird she could sing at times even in her bondage.

It does not appear from the narrative that the wife of Naaman put much faith in the words of the little Hebrew maiden. "Mere childish prattle," she might regard it, and more likely to distress the mind of her husband, and wound his feelings, than to suggest to him any succor. But one of the servants thought otherwise; and a fortunate thing it was for Naaman, in more than one instance, that he was so well served. This servant went and told his lord, saying, "Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel." And when the thing reached the ears of Ben-hadad, he no sooner heard of the possibility of his favorite's cure than he bethought himself of a right royal mode of having the matter

gone about without delay. "Go to," said he, "I will send a letter to the king of Israel." His idol-priests were entirely at his bidding; and he thought that his brother, the king of Israel, must needs possess a similar sway in his own dominions. "What better method can there be of securing the services of the prophet of Israel than by writing to his prince?" And while he asks the cure of his general and prime minister as a favor, he is quite willing to pay for it, for he sends a sum perhaps equivalent to $50,000 of our money.

THE JOURNEY TO ISRAEL.

And furnished thus with such ample credentials, and princely means of paying his way, the Syrian commander sets out for Samaria. Often before he has gone this way, but now he goes with a new purpose. It has been his custom to take what suited him without asking any one's leave; but now he is disposed to pay for what he wants, and will be glad to obtain it at any price. The almost extinguished hope of cure is revived in his breast, and this furnishes a motive more potent than any that ever stimulated him in his raids across the border. So onward he hastens with eager promptitude, and soon leaves the snowy peaks of Lebanon behind him. He travels in his chariot in a style appropriate to one who stands nearest in authority and dignity to the Syrian throne, with a numerous retinue of attendants, with bags of gold and silver, and with many changes of those rich festal garments which formed so much of the wealth of the East. The vine-covered hills of Samaria and the beautiful valley of the Jordan, which have more than once been the scene of his military forays, open peacefully before him, and seem to invite him onward.

But why do his servants direct his chariot to the palace of the king, and not to the humble cottage of the prophet? With his royal master he supposes, that while Elisha is to

effect the cure, he must, like the enchanters and necromancers of his own country, be entirely under the king's authority, and that the best way, therefore, to secure his interposition, is first to obtain the king's favor. He does not know that in spiritual matters Elisha acknowledges no master but God, that this is a province into which Jehoram must not dare to pass, and that it would be easier and safer to go into the thunder-cloud and command the lightning where to strike, than to intrude within the sacred circle where the

THE JORDAN.

prophet of Jehovah exercises his great and awful prerogative.

When the letter of the Syrian monarch was read by his royal brother of Israel, its effect was to awaken in him indignation, surprise and alarm. "Now, when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayst recover him of his leprosy." Read with the jealous eyes of one whose dominions had repeatedly

been invaded and ravaged by this very Ben-hadad, it seemed, in requiring him to do what was only possible for the hand of Omnipotence, intended to provoke new quarrels that should lead to new wars and humiliations. And so Jehoram, idolater though he was, rent his clothes, astonished by the blasphemy and confounded by the arrogant and overbearing unreasonableness of such a demand. "Am I God," he exclaimed, "to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me?"

What was thus transpiring in the royal mansion was not long in becoming known to Elisha. And before Naaman had time to give vent to his feelings, as not only disappointed, but cruelly duped and mocked, the prophet's servant was standing in the presence of the king and delivering a message from his master, marked by all that simplicity and majesty which became a prophet of God, in which he at once rebuked the needless alarms of the king, and summoned the Syrian chief to the true place of cure. "Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

These words may, without strain or violence, be imagined by us to have been spoken by the Gospel of Christ, when in the ministry of our Lord and His apostles, it appeared in its full might and glory on the earth. Naaman the Syrian represents our fallen race, leprous and wretched through sin and its woful fruits. Science, and human philosophy, and literature, and government, and the arts, had all done their utmost for ages to make the poor leper better. But his worst wounds remained unbound and the seat of the malady unreached; and when all the experiments had failed, and all these human agents were at their wits' end, Christianity came with its heavenly medicines, and its simple and sublime directions for cleansing from sin, and said, with a confidence which the his-

tory of the evangelized portion of our race has amply justified, "Bring hither the leper to me."

NAAMAN BEFORE ELISHA.

It is natural to suppose that Naaman would now return to his chariot, and resume his journey with more buoyant expectations than ever; for the prophet's words not only contained an invitation to come to him, but seemed to hold out a certain promise of cure. There was evidently, however, not a little in the state of his mind, as well as of his body, that needed to be corrected and healed. He appears to have counted much on the influence of the rewards which he brought with him, and still more on the imposing effect of his rank, and style, and retinue, and he expected, as he came up "with his horses and with his chariot" to the humble gate of the prophet, that he, the great Syrian lord, would be welcomed with no small show of deference. And what a sore disappointment it must have been to him, what a mortification to his pride, what a revulsion to everything that was heathen and even human within him, when there was no flutter or excitement whatever at his approach—when the prophet did not even come forth to receive him, but sent out a servant to him with the message, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean."

Indignant at the apparent indifference and disrespect with which he was treated, Naaman turned and went away in a rage. "Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" And so he commanded his chariot away from the prophet's gate, and all his fond hopes of cure seemed on the point of being wrecked and given to the winds. It was well for him that at such a crisis he had servants who, looking at the whole

matter more calmly, saw it in its true light, and who loved him so well, and served him so faithfully, as not to fall in with his foolish humor or to flatter it, but respectfully to reason with him and persuade him to comply with the direction of the man of God. And it was better still that, after the first outbreak of his foolish anger was over, he began to see the wisdom of their words, and yielded to their faithful remonstrance, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then when he saith to thee, wash and be clean?"

THE JORDAN.

And so we follow him to the banks of the Jordan, to be the delighted witnesses of his cure. And when we call up the whole scene before our imagination, we shall not fail to see that the prescribed measure, easy though it seemed, was admirably fitted to put to the test the simple trust of Naaman in the word of the man of God. In all likelihood he expected that his recovery would be gradual, and that he would be made gratefully conscious of its progress, as he plunged the seven appointed times into the surging waves. But on six occasions he has already complied with the prophet's words, and each time has risen to the surface before his anxious and breathless attendants on the river's brink, sadly conscious that as yet there is no change, and with his leprosy clinging to him like a Nessus robe. With palpitating heart, he goes down the seventh time and is covered with the waters, and now he feels the sudden passage of a new life through his whole frame. He is "changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"; "his flesh comes again to him like the flesh of a little child"; and he leaps forth upon the green sward with more than the glad buoyancy of youth, a leper no more!

Nor was his body alone the subject of a blessed change, almost at the same moment he parted forever with his idolatry. It is astonishing how rapidly the mind works at certain

great crises of its history. We live an age in an hour. And it was so now with Naaman. He compared the utter impotence of the false gods with the omnipotence of Jehovah, he thought with glowing gratitude of the free, unbought sovereign mercy of God, which had visited him, a stranger and an idolater, with so great a deliverance; and he returned from the river's bank to the prophet's gate the rejoicing subject of two blessed transformations, to avow his belief that the God of Israel was the only living and true God who made the heavens and the earth, and to bind himself by the most solemn vows to His service and worship forever.

In token of his gratitude he requested the prophet to accept of a remuneration suitable to his own rank and wealth, and to the vast obligations under which he lay to him who had been the agent in effecting his cure. And perhaps the attendants, never thinking that the princely gift of their beloved master would be refused, and almost as grateful as himself at the great deliverance, were already busy unloading the bags of gold and silver, and the rich garments, and preparing to carry them into the prophet's house. But Elisha,

LEOPARD.

however rejoicing at this exhibition of a proper appreciation by Naaman of the great benefits he had received, peremptorily refused to accept any compensation for the service he had rendered, justly considering the gift of healing, which had been communicated to himself by God, as not to be bought with money, or employed as matter of traffic, but freely dispensed for *His* glory by whom it had been freely given

The disinterested integrity of the prophet seems to have confirmed the Syrian's faith in the God whom he served, and he departed with the resolution to offer sacrifice to no other, but before leaving he makes two requests—that he might be allowed to take with him to his own country two mules' burden of the earth of Israel; and that when his master Ben-hadad went into the house of Rimmon, the idol-god of Syria, to worship, and he leaned on his shoulder, he might be forgiven if he "bowed himself in the house of Rimmon." The former wish might merely be the expression of a sentiment which is strong in human nature, and which is quite innocent when kept within proper bounds—the desire to have some object near us that may help to keep alive hallowed recollections, and that shall be as a link to associate our thoughts with what is loved and distant. Have you never contracted a special regard for some particular copy of the Bible, which is associated in your memory with interesting passages in your own spiritual history? Have you never found your heart bettered by visiting the scenes of holy and heroic deeds, or even looking on the faded handwriting of one who, while he lived, had made the world his debtor? Could you look without emotion on a vessel of water from the sea of Galilee or from the well of Samaria, or upon a branch that had been plucked from one of the old olive-trees in Gethsemane? And if not, do not blame this grateful Syrian, that in departing from this sacred land, the place at once of his cure and of his conversion, he "took pleasure in her stones, and her very dust was dear to him."

In regard to the second of Naaman's requests, it is enough to say that we do not find the prophet condemning him, and doubtless a higher than the prophet would say, as upon a subsequent occasion, "Neither do I condemn thee." As the prime minister of Ben-hadad, he would be required to accompany him into the temple of Rimmon, and even to support his person and accommodate himself to its motions while he

worshiped there, and he wished Elisha to understand that in this there would be no homage on his part to the idol, but simply the discharge of a civil service to his royal master—and he wishes to know, before he passes from the prophet's presence, whether this could be permitted. And Elisha's answer is, "Go in peace."

GEHAZI.

There was one present during this interview who regarded his master's sublime self-denial with secret displeasure and strong disappointment. The servitor and disciple of Elisha, as Elisha had been of Elijah, his official position was no index of his spiritual state. Probably in all the train of Naaman there was not a heathen servant with a conscience so hardened and a heart so petrified as his. And yet in religious knowledge he was incomparably their superior, and while they were poor idolaters, he was the companion of the chief prophet of the age, and himself in training for the prophetic office. So true it is that we must look for the most wicked men in the world in the most sacred places—not beside bloody heathen altars, and not in the dens of vice in Christian lands, but ministering at the altar of Jehovah, and office-bearers in the kingdom of God. For the man who avowedly serves self and sin and Satan cannot become so stupefied and hardened and degraded as he who glosses over the service of the devil with a thin veneering of piety, and while self is the center and circumference of every plan and purpose, claims that he is doing all for the glory of God. Placed in the midst of great religious advantages, the man who continues insincere and acts a part—or who, though not consciously a hypocrite, yet under the guise of duty is animated not by love but by self-love, and *prudently* takes care of himself, and calls this maintaining the honor of Christ, and guarding the interests of the Church—must necessarily inflict a wound upon his moral nature greater even than that which is caused by open and undisguised immorality. Familiar with spiritual truth,

surrounded by spiritual appliances, professing to act from spiritual motives, and yet under the control of selfishness, he is, what the Saviour described the class as being, a whited sepulchre.

Such was Gehazi, but it happened to him, what happens not to all of the class, to be revealed in his true character before death and the judgment. Naaman the Syrian's bags of silver and gold, and rich changes of raiment, were the touchstone which disclosed the counterfeit, the Ithuriel spear which unmasked the whited devil, and showed the astonished prophet what a base person had been allowed by him for years to haunt his presence, to track his footsteps, and to share in his confidence.

When Gehazi saw the noble and generous Naaman turning his chariot in the direction of his native Syria, and bearing away with him the splendid offerings untouched, he bitterly grudged the lost prize; and, reckless of all the consequences to Elisha and his religion, resolved that if his master would not accept of some portion of the rich Syrian's wealth which he might afterward share, he would find some method of making it his. He *swears* that whatever the man of God hath done, *he* shall not be prevented from grasping the golden shower which seems ready to drop from the hands of the Syrian. "Behold my master hath spared Naaman, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought; but *as the Lord liveth* I will run after him, and take somewhat of him." The moment the grateful Syrian perceives that he is following after, he commands his chariot to halt, and paying respect to the prophet in the person of his servant, alights and hastens back to meet him with the question, "Is all well."

The villain was ready with his well-feigned lie. Two poor scholars of the prophets had that moment arrived from their college on Mount Ephraim, craving assistance both for themselves and their brethren, which Elisha was not in circumstances to supply, and now he had sent him to say that he

was willing to accept of a portion of the gifts which Naaman had so freely offered and so earnestly pressed upon him, to the extent of a talent of silver and two changes of garments.

The request was a large one, but it was exceeded by Naaman's grateful generosity. For binding two talents of silver in two bags, accompanied by two changes of garments, he laid them upon the shoulders of two of his own servants, who bare them before Gehazi to a secret place or store-house in a hill near to the prophet's dwelling. There the hypocrite safely deposited them until he should find an early opportunity of appropriating them to his own use; and his heart exulted in the success of his scheme, and glossed over, as is usual in like cases, the baseness of the artifice of which he had been guilty. Why should he reproach himself for what had thus enriched him, without injuring any one? The wealthy Syrian could never miss two poor talents of silver; besides he had offered them, and seemed gratified that he had been eased of them; and if not, pity it had been if the proud heathen had not paid for his cure. Then as to his master, how could his character suffer in the estimation of Naaman or his servants, or any one else, from being supposed to have begged a small part of what he had been offered before, and that not for himself, but for two poor young men who had come to his house? At all events, no one could ever know of it. Naaman and his servants suspected no imposition, and were gone into a far country, never to return, and no other eye had seen, or ear heard. Now was he happily placed, by his own shrewdness, in a condition to enjoy all that his heart desired. Soon would he be the happy proprietor of lands, and houses, and flocks and servants.

And thus he thought with himself, while a foul and varied progeny of sin had been begotten in his heart of the lust of money. There was the deliberate and plausibly-constructed falsehood told to Naaman, showing him no novice in deception, but skillful and prompt through long practice in the

black art of lying. There was the act of theft, from which his hardened heart did not shrink, even when the magnanimous gratitude of Naaman gave him double what his rapacity asked; and there was the base unfaithfulness to his kind master Elisha, whose heart had confided in him for so many years; and there was the treachery to the cause of religion, in taking away from Naaman's miraculous cure its character of generosity, throwing an air of selfishness around the deed of mercy, and disturbing the favorable impressions which had been made upon the Syrian's mind.

WASHING BEFORE OR AFTER A MEAL.

And was there indeed no eye that saw the rapacious deed, no ear that heard the lying tongue? "Whence comest thou, Gehazi?" said his master. The answer which usually falls from the lips of the conscience-stricken fool dropped from Gehazi; "Thy servant went—nowhither." He is ready with the second lie to buttress the first. "And went not my heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Was this an occasion to receive money, and to receive garments, with olive-yards and vineyards and sheep and oxen and man-servants and maid-servants?" Forth, O deceiver, from my presence. But, ere going, take MY gift, as thou hast taken Naaman's. He gave thee two talents of silver, which may support thee for a few years; my present will last thee for life, and be handed down as an heirloom to thy seed. Thou hast taken the money; take now the *stamp* with it. Let the Syrian's leprosy follow his lucre. "The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed

forever." And speechless, confounded, feeling the white heat of the fell disease beginning to burn upon his brow, he less goes than vanishes from the prophet's presence, "a leper as white as snow."

The means of discovery here were supernatural. All the incidents of the scene, and even the workings of his servant's mind, were revealed to the prophet. But there are many ways in which deeds of darkness may become known to our fellow-men, "and that which was done in secret be proclaimed upon the housetops." There is an infatuation connected with crime which generally makes it leave a clue for its own detection. It is sometimes as if the very birds of the air told the matter. Some expression dropped in a moment of thoughtlessness, some undestroyed writing, the ravings of delirium, and even in some instances overdone efforts at concealment, have torn aside the veil from deeds of violence or fraud and brought the transgressor to an ignominious doom.

But even when crimes succeed in eluding human detection, there are eyes that see, and a resistless hand that will one day bring every work into judgment. Two witnesses you have, O man, to every act: God and your own conscience. There is one sleepless eye that follows us everywhere and forever. And when conscience becomes feeble as a judge, it continues incorruptible and faithful as a witness.

Perhaps Gehazi had tried to palliate his sin and apologize for it to his conscience, by the plea of providing for his family; just as men every day make this the apology for acts of moral obliquity. In this instantaneous judgment, let men see what sort of inheritance it is that sin bequeaths to children.

ABANA AND PHARPAR.

Ignorant of what was transpiring behind him, Naaman makes his way homeward to his beautiful Damascus. There was much in the Syrian metropolis of which he might well be proud. Nor do we wonder that his patriotism and his anger

had alike been kindled to a white heat when bidden to bathe in the muddy waters of the Jordan, in preference to the pure and salubrious streams which irrigated the orchards and gardens of Damascus. This city is situated in a plain of vast size and of extreme fertility, lying east of the great chain of Anti-Libanus, on the edge of the desert. This fertile plain, which is nearly circular, and about thirty miles in diameter, owes its productivness to the river Abana (now known as the Barada), which, with the Pharpar, forms the "rivers" of the province "of Damascus." Thus the city of Damascus, upon the margin of the desert, almost surrounded with hopeless, remediless sterility, is supplied with waters more copious, more universally diffused, more pure, cool and refreshing, than those of any city in the world. The Abana, rising high up on the western flank of the Anti-Libanus, forces its way through the chain. Running for some miles, brawling, roaring, tearing among the mountains, it plunges into a stupendous gorge, between cliffs several hundred feet in height, the mountain towering a thousand feet above them. Struggling on five miles farther through wild mountain gorges, it is joined by its larger and principal source from the fountain of Fijih. This river gushes out from the base of a mountain which rises up in steepest acclivities two or three thousand feet, forming one of the loftiest summits of this mountain range. An arch fifteen to twenty feet in height, of massive masonry, in some unrecorded age, has been thrown over the fountain-head of the river; and above the arch, and embracing the space of it, stands an ancient temple, constructed of enormous blocks of hewn stone, and bearing the marks of great antiquity. It may have been in its splendor in the days of Baalbec and Palmyra. From under this temple and arch the waters leap out in furious jets, bounding, roaring, tearing along like a wild, ravenous beast bursting from his cage—all foam and uproar. The waters of this river, springing from the snow-clad summits of the mountain, which neither the

foot of man, nor beast, nor bird has defiled, are pure as heaven, cold as ice, and clear as crystal. In a stream thirty feet wide, four or five deep, swift as a waterfall, which no man ever forded, in which none ever bathed, this river joins and swallows up that from the upper fountain. It is at once the swiftest, clearest, coldest, shortest river in the world.

DAMASCUS.

From this point the river flows rapidly on, over a bed of rock, amidst plantations of figs, pomegranates, vines and olives, every little valley or gentle slope being cultivated, till it breaks through a cleft in the mountain, upon the open country eastward—at the distance of two or three miles from Damascus, and a few hundred feet above the level of the city. The river, divided into numerous channels, and again subdivided into innumerable streams and rills, permeates every street and lane of Damascus, opening fountains and jets of water in the courts of every house, diffusing through all the city a delightful freshness and fragrance, and imparting health and happiness to every household. And everywhere, within and without the city, for miles in extent, it has evoked an exuberant luxuriance of vegetation, a verdure more deep and rich, and a profusion of fruits more abundant than in any land or clime on earth. Viewed in the distance, from one of the barren buttresses of the mountain, the city lies embowered and bathed in a perfect sea of verdure, its white minarets rising above the trees that embosom them, surmounted by their gilded crescents gleaming in the splendor of Oriental sunlight, as if some happy island of the blest had dropped down from above on the desert plain below. On the south towers the snowy height of Hermon, overlooking the whole scene. All around you are the caverns and tombs of Mussulman saints. Above rise the mountains, bare, sterile and forbidding as the peaks of Sinai itself, the very seat of desolation; and below the desert plain, yet more desolate, by contrast with the island

lake of deepest verdure which it encompasses. Here on this platform, Mohammed, on his way to Damascus, is said to have gazed long upon the wondrous scene, and then, turning back, to have said, "No, I will not descend to that city. Man can have but one paradise, and my paradise is fixed above."

A traveler says, "The lovely city of Damascus surpassed all I had hitherto seen. It has the appearance of one vast garden studded with houses, for every house is built in the midst of a garden; and it well deserves all the encomiums bestowed upon it. The mosques and bazaars surprise the traveler by their beauty; nor is his astonishment less excited by the riches displayed in the street called 'Straight,' where all kinds of Eastern and Western produce can be had—stuffs, velvets, Cashmere shawls, Damascus silks, and every description of fresh and preserved fruits. Then, the bustle of the caravans arriving from all parts of the East, the turbans, the noble families, the wealth of the place, the caravansaries, all combine to form a dazzling and bewildering scene. The costume of the men on the streets is rich and varied. Great numbers of pleasure-hunters are at all times found lounging in the cafes, drawing their pipes and hubble-bubbles, sipping coffee, swallowing sherbet, sucking sweetmeats, bolting fruits, and above all talking scandal. Some of these cafes are in the most frequented streets; and some of them, tolerably good imitations of rustic bowers, are in the gardens, where abundance of shade and verdure, and artificial waterfalls, and playing fountains, conspire to enhance the luxuries which they afford." Such is Damascus, which, from the time when Benhadad's prime minister journeyed to Samaria to be cured of the leprosy, has been a center of wealth and luxury in the East. But resuming our narrative, the next incident that meets us in the life of Elisha is that of

THE BORROWED AXE.

Elisha had sent away the Syrian with his $50,000; and yet he and those who were associated with him needed the money

badly enough. Their accommodations, plain and simple as they were, were too strait for them; and they were about to put up a log-house, such as the early settlers of our own country were quite familiar with, and such as the pioneers in the newer portion of the country are still accustomed to rear. Even the tools they used were in part borrowed, and as one was fetching a hearty stroke, in felling timber, his axe-head fell into the water. "Alas, Master! for it was borrowed," he exclaimed. "And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place, and he cut down a stick and cast it in thither, and the iron did swim. Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand and took it."

RECLINING AT TABLE.

ELISHA'S SAFEGUARD.

We have a very noble display, both of the might of that supernatural influence which the prophet possessed, and of his magnanimity toward his mortal enemies when caught in their own snare, in his treatment of the Syrian host who were sent out for the purpose of surprising and seizing him. Dismayed at the appearance of this band, with horses and chariots encompassing the city where they dwelt, the servant of the prophet gave way to despair, until his eyes being opened, he beheld the "mountain full of horses and chariots round about Elisha." Smitten with sudden blindness, the

hostile troops were conducted by the prophet within the walls of Samaria, and delivered up prisoners to the king of Israel. He, with cowardly eagerness, proposed to put them to death. "Shall I smite them? shall I smite them?" But Elisha stayed his hand. "Wouldst thou smite those who are taken captive? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and return to their master."

SAMARIA BESIEGED.

The subsequent deliverance of the metropolis of Israel from the accumulated horrors of siege and famine, forms another remarkable passage of Elisha's life. When the people were reduced to the utmost necessity, the king vowed vengeance against the prophet, who had warned him of the evils hanging over him, and whose counsels he had despised. Elisha foresaw, and informed the king, that although all human help was vain, the Lord was about to send deliverance, and that even to-morrow provisions should be so plentiful as to be of little value. To this announcement a certain lord, "on whose hand the king leaned," replied, with an impious sneer, "Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, then might this thing be." And Elisha said, "Thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not eat thereof." How easy it was for the power of the Lord to accomplish such a thing as this, the event showed.

THE DESERTED TENTS.

No angel drew forth a sword of flame to consume the armies of Syria, no lightning fell on them from heaven, no earthquake was employed to swallow up their camp. "The Lord made them to hear a noise," as it were of chariots and horsemen; and panic-struck, they fancied that the neighbouring powers were come up to the relief of the besieged city. And they arose, and leaving their camp stored with provisions of all sorts, they fled for their lives. Thus were liberty and plenty restored at once to the inhabitants of Samaria, agree-

ably to the prediction of Elisha. And in conformity also with the prophet's denunciation, the infidel favorite of the king saw, but did not taste, the food thus furnished to the famished city, for he was trodden to death in the gate by the crowd which rushed forth to seize the expected supply.

HAZAEL.

And now Hazael comes upon the stage, holds up in his hand the wet cloth with which he has choked his master, and seems to say, "This is my flag, and terrible title to fame." Elisha is on a visit to Syria. He is in the midst of the enemies of his country. But the fame of his prophetic power disarmed their hostility, and led to his meeting with the predestined ruler of whom he had heard years before from his master Elijah. He received an eager inquiry from the sick-bed of Ben-hadad; it was presented by Hazael, at the head of a train of forty camels laden with the choicest gifts—"a present of every good thing"—of Damascus. Nothing seemed too costly to win a favorable reply. What that reply was it is hard to say. Did the prophet, according to one reading, deliver one unbroken message of death? Or did he, as seems more probable, with changes of tone and voice, which we cannot recover, deliver the double oracle, "Go, and say to him, Thou shalt live, thou shalt live; but the Lord hath showed me that he shall die, that he shall die"? There is something in the tortuous reply not inconsistent with the ambiguous answers of Elisha on other occasions. It is one of his contrasts with the blunt abruptness of Elijah. It may be that he spoke of the double issue at stake in the sick-chamber of the king, and in the courtier's mind. But other thoughts than those of Ben-hadad's death or life pressed in upon his soul. He gazed earnestly on Hazael's face; saw his future elevation, and saw with it calamities which that elevation would bring on his country. It is very rarely that the prophets are overcome by their human emotions. They

speak (and so Elisha did on this very occasion) as men speak who are constrained by some overruling power. But the evils which he now presaged were so awful, that the tears rushed into his eyes. Hazael himself stood astounded at the prophet's message. He, insignificant as he seemed, a mere dog, to be raised to such lofty power, and to do such famous deeds! Returning to his master, he told him that the prophet said he should surely recover. But on the morrow he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died; and Hazael was at once raised to the throne of Syria. Under him Damascus became again a formidable power. He was worshiped almost with Divine honors by his countrymen even at the time of the Christian era. By him the trans-Jordanic territory was laid waste, its strongholds burnt, and its population massacred. All that the prophet foretold of him was strictly fulfilled.

In his relation with Hazael, as with Naaman, Elisha appears as the prophet of the Syrians as well as of the Israelites. It is this feature of his character that is caught in the only notice of him contained in the New Testament: "There were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, but none were healed save Naaman the Syrian." From his time the prophets of Israel appear as the oracles, as the monitors, not only of Israel, but of the surrounding nations. The larger comprehensiveness, for which the way had been prepared in the reign of Solomon, was now beginning to show itself in this the most national of all their institutions.

JEHU.

With Elisha and Hazael, in the vision of Elijah at Horeb, had been named Jehu, the son or grandson of Nimshi. He was with Ahab when he went to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth. He was now high in the favor of Ahab's son, as captain of the host in the Syrian war. In that war of chariots and horses, he had acquired an art little

practiced by the infantry of the ancient Israelites. He was known through the whole army and country for his furious driving. He was evidently a man of impetuous, torrid temperament, and yet not deficient in shrewdness and sagacity.

The army which he commanded was at Ramoth-Gilead. Here, as before at Gibbethon, and as so frequently in history, the camp became a second power in the State. In all ages, armies have made and unmade dynasties. The king himself had been present at the siege, and had returned home to Jezreel to be cured of his wounds from the arrows of the Syrian archers. In his absence, a young man of the prophets was sent by Elisha to anoint Jehu. He arrived at the camp, bearing a small flask of the sacred oil—his garments girt round him, as of one traveling in haste, and his appearance wild and excited. Jehu was sitting, as was his wont, surrounded by his officers, by whom he was greatly beloved, and with whom he lived on easy terms. The prophet singled him out from the midst of his captains. The soldier and the youth withdrew into the house, in front of which the group were sitting. Through the house they went from chamber to chamber, till they reached the innermost recess. The officers remained without in anxious expectation. Presently the door of the house opened, and the youth rushed out and disappeared as suddenly as he had appeared. Then Jehu came forth. His companions asked him in their curt, soldierly way, with a dash of sarcasm, "Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?" They were

CHAMELEON.

little accustomed to be moved with any sentiment of respect for the Lord's prophets. And yet they were more readily influenced by what the young man had done than their mode of characterizing him might have led one to expect. Jehu put off their inquiry for a moment. "Ye know the man and his communication;" as much as to say, "you know as well as I do, that this mysterious visitor was no other than a prophet, coming and going after the manner of Elijah." Again, with an abruptness which gives an air of military life to the whole transaction, they replied, "It is a lie; tell us now." Then he broke his reserve, and revealed the secret interview. It had indeed been a messenger of Elisha, to fulfill the long pending mission of Elijah. Once more there was a consecrated king of Israel. The oil of inauguration had been poured on the head of Jehu. He was to go forth "the anointed of the Lord," to exterminate the house of Ahab. It was as if a spark had been set to a train long prepared. There was not a moment's hesitation. The officers tore off their military cloaks, and spread them under his feet, where he stood on the top of the stairs leading down into the court. As he stood on this extemporized throne, with no seat but the steps covered by the carpeting of the square pieces of cloth, they blew the well-known blast of the ram's horn which always accompanied the inauguration of a king of Israel.

From this moment the course of Jehu is fixed. The destiny long brooding over him—the design perhaps raised in his mind from the day when he first met Elijah—is to be accomplished. "If it be your mind," said he, "then let none go forth nor escape out of the city to tell it in Jezreel." Spoken like a wise captain! He will carry the news himself. He mounted his chariot; he armed himself with his bow and quiver. Jezreel was a considerable distance away, and the Jordan to be crossed. But the driving of Jehu was a proverb amongst his countrymen, and it continues to be proverbial with us even now, and bids fair to do so till the end of time.

Therefore the distance melted away under the swift and fervid chariot-wheels. Followed by a large part of the army, he advances upon Jezreel. Twice over we are told, not without a certain pathos, that the king of Israel lay sick in Jezreel of the wounds that he had received in the battles of his country, and that his nephew, the king of Judah, had come to visit him in his sick-chamber. They were startled by the announcement of the sentinel—who stood always on the high watch-tower of Jezreel looking toward the East—that the dust of a vast multitude was seen advancing from the Jordan valley. Often has this passage of sacred writ, and other kindred portions—such as that which records the suspense of old Eli when his sons were out with the army, engaged in the battle in which they were slain, and the ark of God was taken; and that other portion which leads to the deeply pathetic lamentation of David for Absalom—been imitated by the writers of uninspired works, but never equalled. The first apprehension of the kings must have been of a Syrian invasion, or of a Syrian alliance. Two horsemen were successively sent out to bring information, but were detained by Jehu, so as to secure the suddenness of his arrival; till at last, as the cavalcade drew nearer, the sentinel on the watch-tower recognized, by the furious speed of the foremost horses, that the charioteer could be no other than Jehu, the mad driver. Jehoram, still apparently filled with the thought of the Syrian war, roused himself from his sick-bed, and accompanied by his nephew, went out to meet the captain of his host. Jehu had halted, in his onward march, at a well-known spot, close under the walls of Jezreel.

NABOTH AVENGED.

He was determined to receive them in the fatal plat of Naboth's ground. In answer to Jehoram's question, "Is it peace, Jehu?" he revealed his purpose. It was the great queen-mother, the mighty Jezebel, that was the main object of

his attack. The king wheeled his chariot round and fled. Jehu drew his bow "with all his strength," with all the strength which a man throws into the stroke upon which hang his fortunes. Jehoram sank down dead in his chariot.

Jehu had been commissioned to execute the Lord's judgment upon the house of Ahab, and his relentless nature concurred with his own interest in giving the widest possible interpretation to his commission, while he was careful, in every fresh deed of blood, to declare himself the Lord's avenger, who did but execute the orders given to him. No doubt he was the appointed minister of delayed judgment, but we cannot fail to see that he used that commission for the purpose of sweeping away from his path all those from whose vengeance or hate any disturbance might, even by remote possibility, be apprehended to his future reign. He chose to recollect that the king of Judah was Ahab's grandson, and to suppose that he was included in his commission. This monarch had fled, and in the pause which Jehoram's death occasioned, was already some distance away; but Jehu sent his servants in pursuit of him. He fled swiftly, but so closely followed as to receive a mortal wound.

Meanwhile Jehu looked upon his bloody work with grim complacency, and directed the body of his slain master to be taken from the chariot, and thrown into the plat of ground. "Remember," he said to Bidkar, his chief captain, "how that when I and thou rode together after Ahab, his father, the Lord laid this burden upon him. 'Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons; and I will requite thee in this plat,' saith the Lord. Now, therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the Lord." This reads like the old Greek dramas—none of them, however, as old as this—of accomplished fate. He who had witnessed the doom imposed, was also selected and commissioned to execute it. And not only in that plat, but wherever the house of Ahab should be

found, and wherever the blood of Naboth had left its traces, the decree of vengeance was pronounced; the blood of Ahab and Jehoram and Ahaziah was but the beginning of the expiation; the horizon was darkened with the visions of vultures glutting on the carcasses of the dead, and the packs of savage dogs feeding on their remains, or lapping up their blood.

JEZEBEL.

Jehu was now near the gates of Jezreel. The palace overhung the walls, and looked down on the dreadful scene of guilt and of retribution. There was one spirit in the house of Ahab still unbroken. The aged queen-mother tired her head and painted her eyelids with lead-ore, to give them a darker border and a brighter and larger appearance, and looked through the high latticed windows of the watch-tower. She saw that her doom was sealed; but she determined to show that she feared not, mourned not, and to cast one bitter and burning word upon the head of the destroyer, such as should haunt and scorch him all his life. As for this purpose, it was necessary to show herself, if but for a moment, she applied herself to her toilet, and arrayed herself carefully, to let it be seen that she appeared as a queen, and not as a suppliant and a mourner, as the neglect of her person would have implied. The supreme hour of her dynasty and of her life was come; and as Jehu's chariot rolled up the ascent, she cast her thoughts back to the days when Omri, the founder of her dynasty, had trampled down the false usurper Zimri. It is difficult to know whether her words were spoken in stern rebuke, "Had Zimri peace who slew his lord?" or in bitter irony, "Welcome to Zimri, the slayer of his lord." The savage conqueror looked up and cried, "Who is on my side, who?" Two of the attendants looked out at his call, and dashed the queen down from the window. She fell between the palace and the advancing chariot. The blood flew up against the wall and over the horses as they

trampled her down under their hoofs. The conquering procession drove through the gateways, and sat down to a triumphal feast. Not till the feast was over did a spark of feeling rise within the breast of Jehu at the fall of so much grandeur. He bade his servants go out and bury the woman who with all her crimes was yet the daughter of a king. But it was too late. The body had been left on the "mounds,"

ABRAHAM'S OAK, NEAR HEBRON.

as they are called in Eastern stories, where the offal is thrown outside the city gates. The wild dogs of Jezreel had done their work; only the harder parts of the frame remained, the skull, the hands and the feet.

SLAUGHTER OF THE PRINCES.

Every stage of Jehu's progress was now marked with blood. To the elders of Samaria he wrote—for we now begin to hear of written communications more frequently than formerly--

telling them to select one of the seventy princes who were under their charge, proclaim him king, and uphold his cause by force of arms. He well knew they would not accept his challenge, and the irony of the letter was characteristic of Jehu. They sent in reply a message that they were ready to do his bidding in all things—they did not wish to link their fortunes with the fallen house of Ahab. Then he orders them to send the heads of these princes to him at Jezreel. They are sent in baskets, and he has them dumped in two piles by the sides of the gate. Passing out in the morning, he gloats his eyes for a moment upon the gory spectacle, then, with his usual grim sarcasm, says to those around him, "Ye be righteous; behold I conspired against my master and slew him; but WHO SLEW ALL THESE?" Marching to the capital, he meets and slaughters forty-two members of the royal family of Judah, on their way to visit the court of Israel. This gay cavalcade of princes ride into the jaws of death. They are slain in a well, reminding us of the tragedy of Cawnpore.

THE RECHABITE.

Immediately after this Jehu came across a figure who might have reminded him of Elijah himself. It was Jehonadab the son of Rechab—that is the son of the "Rider"—an Arab chief of the Kenite tribe, who was the founder or second founder of one of those Nazarite communities which had grown up in the kingdom of Israel, and which in this instance combined a kind of monastic discipline with the manners of the Bedouin race from whom they were descended. It may be that the place of their meeting, "the Shearing-house," or house of the shepherds, was a usual haunt of the pastoral chief. The king was in his chariot; the Arab was on foot. Jehu knew the stern tenacity of purpose that distinguished Jehonadab and his tribe. "And he saluted him, and said to him, 'Is thy heart right with my heart, as my heart is with thy heart?' 'It is.' 'If it be, give me thine hand.' And

he gave him his hand." The king lifted him up into the chariot, and whispered into his ear the first intimation of the religious revolution which he had determined to make along with the political revolution already accomplished. Side by side with the king, the austere hermit sat in the royal chariot as he entered the capital of Israel, the warrior in his coat of mail, the ascetic in his hair-cloth.

THE MASSACRE AT SAMARIA.

A splendid festival was announced in the temple of Baal. With consummate wisdom, and yet with infernal duplicity and

TOWN AND LAKE.

treachery, the new king announced, "Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much." It is another instance of how the unscrupulous go directly to their end—how obstacles melt before a man of determined will, who at the same time is utterly oblivious of moral distinctions, or who, worse still, counts himself a holy and a consecrated man, and throws the halo of religion and the shield of conscience over all his acts. The whole heathen population of Israel were summoned by Jehu; "there was not a man left that came not," and the

vast temple was packed from one end to the other. Then the sacred vestments were brought out, and thorough search was made to see that no "servant of the Lord" had intruded himself among the true worshipers. The sacrifices being made ready, the king and the anchorite went in together to offer the victims to the heathen gods. There was nothing in those unmoved countenances to betray the secret. They were able to the last moment to preserve the mask of conformity to the Phenician worship. They completed their sacrifice and left the temple. Round about the building were eighty men of the king's own immediate officers and body-guard.

They were intrusted with the double charge, of preventing the escape of any one, and secondly of striking the deadly blow. They entered, and the temple was strewn with corpses, which as fast as they fell, the soldiers threw out with their own hands. At last, when the bloody work was over, they found their way to the inner sanctuary, which towered like a fortress above the rest. There Baal was seated aloft, with the gods of Phenicia around him. The wooden images small and great, were dragged from their thrones and burnt. The pillar or statue of Baal was shattered. The temple was razed to the ground; only a mass of ruins marked the place where in the morning a magnificent edifice reflected the rays of the sun from its summit; and in afterdays its site was known as the depository of all the filth of the town.

CHARACTER OF JEHU.

With him action followed thought as the bolt the flash. The firstlings of his heart were the very firstlings of his hand. Pity never weakened his will, and we see him wading through blood with nerves that seem to be made of iron. He is exactly one of those men whom we are compelled to recognize, not for what is good or great in themselves, but as instruments for destroying evil and preparing the way for good. Of such characters history gives us many instances, and our

own times have furnished at least one notable example. A destiny long kept in view by himself or others, inscrutable secrecy and reserve in carrying out his plans, a union of cold, remorseless tenacity with occasional bursts of furious, wayward, fanatical zeal: this is Jehu as he is set before us in the Biblical narrative, the worst type of a son of Jacob, the "supplanter,"[1] as he is called, without the noble and princely qualities of Israel, the most unlovely of all the heroes of his country.

It is declared through the voice of Hosea, that for the blood even of Jehoram and Jezebel and Ahaziah an account must be rendered. "I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu." Their blood, like the blood which has been shed again and again, in the convulsions of nations and churches, was a righteous retribution on them; but from him who shed it a no less righteous retribution is at last exacted by the just judgment which punishes the wrong-doer, not only of one party in Church or State, but of both.

THE ARROW OF DELIVERANCE.

Elisha lived on through the reigns of Jehu and Jehoahaz, and for some time after Joash had ascended the throne. At last in his ninetieth year, he was struck with his mortal sickness. The young Joash came to visit the aged seer who had placed his grandfather on the throne, and wept over his face, and lamented that he who had been his father, and who had been to him a defense against the chariots and horsemen of Syria, was now to depart. The prophet roused himself from his sick-bed, and bade the king take the bow—the favorite weapon of the chiefs of Israel, and then through the window open toward the eastern quarter, whence the hostile armies of Syria came, the youthful king, with the aged hands of Elisha planted on his hands, shot once, twice, thrice, upon the ground outside. The energy of the youth was not equal to the energy

[1] 2 Kings x. 19.

of the expiring prophet. He ought to have gone on shooting till he had exhausted the quiver. It would have been a sign and pledge of the entire destruction of his enemies. But he fell short of the full measure of success that was possible for him, by his want of earnestness and zeal.

OWL OF HOLY LAND.

And what are all the failures, the disasters, the losses, the wrecks of life, but this very thing—smiting thrice, when we should smite five or six times—stopping when we should go on, becoming weary and faint and giving up, when we should press forward, losing all when we might gain all?

THE CHARACTER OF ELISHA'S MINISTRY.

His life was not spent, like his predecessor's, in unavailing struggles, but in wide-spread successes. He was sought out not as the enemy, but as the friend and counselor of kings. One king was crowned at his bidding, and wrought all his will. Another consulted him in war, another on the treatment of his prisoners, another in the extremity of illness, another to receive his parting counsels. "My father," was their reverent address to him. Even in far Damascus his face was known. Ben-hadad treated him with filial respect; Hazael trembled before him; Naaman hung on his words as upon an oracle. If for a moment he shows that the remembrance of the murder of Naboth and the prophets by Ahab and Jezebel is burnt into his soul, yet he never actively interposes to protest against the idolatry or the tyranny of the court. Even in the revolution of Jehu he takes no direct

part. Against the continuance of the worship of Baal and Ashtaroth, or the revival of the Golden Calves, there is no recorded word of protest. There is no express teaching handed down. Even in his oracular answers there is something uncertain and hesitating. He used the minstrel's harp to call forth his peculiar powers, as though he had not them completely within his own control. His deeds were not of wild terror, but of gracious, soothing, homely beneficence, bound up with the ordinary tenor of human life. When he smites with blindness it is that he may remove it again; when he predicts, it is the prediction of plenty and not of famine. At his house by Jericho the bitter spring is sweetened; for the widow of one of the prophets the oil is increased; even the workmen at the prophet's huts are not to lose the axe-head which has fallen through the thickets of the Jordan into the eddying stream; the young prophets, at their common meal, are saved from the deadly herbs which had been poured from the blanket of one of them into the caldron; and they enjoy the multiplied provision of corn. At his home in Carmel he is the oracle and support of the neighborhood; and the child of his benefactress is raised to life, with an intense energy of sympathy that gives to the whole scene a grace as of the tender domestic life of modern times. And when at last his end comes, in a great old age, he is not rapt away like Elijah, but buried with a splendid funeral; a sumptuous tomb was shown in after years over his grave, in the royal city of Samaria

OSTRICH.

and funeral dances were celebrated round his honored resting-place. Alone of all the graves of the saints of the Old Testament, there were wonders wrought at it, which seemed to continue after death the grace of his long and gentle life. The supernatural power which had pervaded him so long did not seem to leave his body. A band of plundering Moabites having murdered a man, were about burying him, when they saw a troop of soldiers approaching. In their hurry to escape they cast the body into Elisha's sepulchre, but the moment it touched the coffin of the prophet, life re-entered it, and the robbers saw their victim stand up alive and gaze into their astonished faces.

Such was Elisha, greater yet less, less yet greater than Elijah. He is less, for character is the real prophetic gift. The man, the will, the personal grandeur of the prophet are greater than any amount of prophetic acts, or any extent of prophetic success. We cannot dispense with the mighty past, even when we have shot far beyond it. Nations, churches, individuals, must all be content to feel as dwarfs in comparison with the giants of old time, with the reformers, the martyrs, the heroes of their early youthful reverence. Those who follow cannot be as those who went before. A prophet like Elijah, comes once, and does not return. Elisha, both to his countrymen and to us, is but the successor, the faint reflection of his predecessor. When he appeared before the three suppliant kings, his chief honor was that he was "Elisha, the son of Shaphat, who poured water on the hands of Elijah." And though after this he became greatly distinguished on his own account, still his character has not the towering majesty of his master.

Less, yet greater. For the work of the great ones of this earth is carried on by far inferior instruments, but on a wider scale, and it may be in a far higher spirit. The life of an Elijah is never spent in vain. Even his death has not taken him from us. He struggles single-handed, he thinks, and

without effect; and in the very crisis of the nation's history, he is suddenly and mysteriously removed. But his work continues; his mantle falls; his teaching spreads; his enemies perish. The prophet preaches and teaches, the martyr dies and passes away; but other men enter into his labors. By the impulse of Elijah, Elisha and Elisha's successors, prophets and sons of prophets, are raised up by fifties and by hundreds. They must work in their own way. They must not try to retain the spirit of Elijah by repeating his words, or by clothing themselves in his rough mantle, or by living his strange life. What was begun in fire and storm, in solitude and awful visions, must be carried on through winning arts, and healing acts, and gentle words of peaceful and social intercourse; not in the desert of Horeb, or on the top of Carmel, but in the crowded thoroughfares of Samaria, in the gardens of Damascus, by the rushing waters of Jordan.

Elisha himself may be as nothing compared with Elijah; his wonders may be forgotten. He dies by the long decay of years; no chariots of fire are there to lighten his last moments, or bear away his soul to heaven. Yet he knows that, though unseen, they are always around him. Once in the city of Dothan, when he is compassed about with hostile armies, and his servant cries out for fear, Elisha said, "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. . . . And, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots round about Elisha." It is a vision of which the meaning acquires double force from its connection with the actual history; as if to show by the same figure, that the hope which bore Elijah to his triumphal end was equally present with Elisha. Elijah, and those who are like Elijah, are needed, in critical and momentous occasions, to "prepare the way for the Lord." But Elisha, and those who are like Elisha, have a humbler, and yet a wider sphere; for their works are not the works of the Baptist, but are the deeds, if not of Christ Himself, at any rate of "the least in His kingdom."

As we read the story of these seers of a past age, how we realize the truth of the poet's line—

"Naught shall abide but mutability."

Yet the *truths they uttered* abide. The men were mortal, their messages were indestructible. Uttered still by other lips, and dying not with the death of time, they shall bear fruit forever! It is for us to take them up, publish them to the world, and especially to see that they are formed within ourselves as principles of life and growth. Our review of Elisha's career will not be profitless if it strengthens our resolution so to live that when we are taken hence we may look back upon life without regret. All men have their mission. One man's may be more solemn, more weighty, more important, than another's, but the great secret of godly living is, whatever our vocation, to do all things in the fear of the Lord. In this way we shall preserve a conscience void of offence, and shall be able to look death in the face without unmanly fears on the one hand or foolhardiness on the other. We have all read of the man who called a young friend to his bedside "to see how calmly a Christian could die." There was something very striking in that last act of a great and good man. But there are humble Christians in every community who leave the world with so much calmness, so much evident happiness, that to witness their departure is good for the soul's health. Such instances show that the comforts of religion are most manifest just when all others are about to come to nothing. "Be ye therefore followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

THE PROPHET OF THE GOSPEL.

ISAIAH.

VI.

ISAIAH.

The Great Man of His Age—Statesman as well as Prophet—Of Royal Blood—Lives at the Capital—Names of his Children—His Style—Contrast with other Prophets—Simple yet Sublime and Exultant—A Seer—The Evangelical Eagle—Isaiah's Call—Sublime Vision in the Temple—The Seraphim—The Prophet's Mission—His Catholicity and Breadth of View—Messianic Prophecies—The Prophet of the Gospel—In Advance of his Age—a Plain Preacher—Denounces the Vices of his Time—Invasion of Sennacherib—Insulting Letter of the Heathen King—Faith of Hezekiah—God Speaks Through Isaiah—Destruction of the Assyrian Host—Murder of Sennacherib by his Sons—The Prophet's Hymn—This great Jewish Rescue a Type of all Great National Deliverances—Martin Luther and the Forty-sixth Psalm—Hebrew Melody of Lord Byron.

ISAIAH stands out at once as the representative of his own age, and yet as a universal teacher of mankind. Whilst the other prophets of his period are known only to the by-paths of theology, in the quaint texts of remote preachers, Isaiah is a household word everywhere. This is the first point in the history of the kingdom of Judah where we are able to measure the periods by the names rather of distinguished teachers than of kings or chief priests. In the earlier stages of the history of Judah, we find no prophet of magnitude equal to Jehoshaphat or Jehoiada or Uzziah. But no contemporary king or priest was of magnitude equal to Isaiah, and he was succeeeded by two prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, inferior only to himself.

For the first time since Elisha, we have a prophet, of whose life and aspect we can be said to have any details. He was statesman as well as prophet. He lived not in the remote villages of Judah, like Micah, or wandering over hill and dale like Elijah and Amos, but in the center of all political life

and activity. His whole thoughts take the color of Jerusalem. He is the first prophet specially attached to the capital and the court. He was, according to Jewish tradition, of royal blood, the cousin of Uzziah, his father Amoz being held to be a younger son of Joash. He wrote Uzziah's life; and his first prophecies, beginning in the close of that reign, illustrate the reign of Jotham, as well as of the three succeeding sovereigns. He was the trusted friend and counselor of the good King Hezekiah.

His individual and domestic life was a kind of impersonation of the prophetic office. His wife was a prophetess. According to a practice which seems to have prevailed throughout his career, he and his children all bear prophetic names: "Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for a sign and a wonder in Israel from the Lord of Hosts." His own name signifies "the salvation of Jehovah." One son he called "Remnant-shall-return," another "Haste-n-booty speed-spoil," adding that before the child should be able to talk, the wealth of Damascus and the booty of Samaria should be carried away before the king of Assyria.

WARRIOR.

He had a circle of disciples in whom his spirit was long continued. Legends and apocryphal books have gathered around him as round another Solomon or another Elijah. Of no other book of the Old Testament, except the Psalter, have the subsequent effects in the world been so marked, or the principles so fruitful of results

for the future. In fact his appearance was a new step in the prophetic dispensation. The length of his life, the grandeur of his social position, gave a force to what he said, beyond what was possible in the fleeting addresses of the humbler prophets who had preceded him. There is a royal air in his attitude, in his movements, in the sweep of his vision, which commands attention. In the words of the son of Sirach, he was at once "great and faithful" in his "vision." Nothing escapes him in the events of his time. The older prophetic writings are worked up by him into his own words. He is not ashamed of building on the foundation of those who have gone before him. All that there is of general instruction in Joel, Micah, or Amos, is reproduced in Isaiah. But his style has its own marked peculiarity and novelty. The fierce, impassioned addresses of Joel and Nahum, the abrupt strokes, the contorted turns of Hosea and Amos, give way to something more of a continuous flow, where stanza succeeds to stanza, and canto to canto, with almost a natural sequence. Full of imagery, his poetry still has a simplicity which was at that time so rare as to provoke the satire of the more popular prophets. They, pushing to an excess the nervous rhetoric of their predecessors, considered him but an instructor of babes. Like Wordsworth among modern poets, he was exposed to the taunts of the superficial, who could not comprehend his simple and sublime philosophy. "Whom shall he teach knowledge, and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts!" Those constant recurrences of the general truths of spiritual religion, majestic in their plainness, seemed to them mere commonplace repetitions; "precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little." It is the universal complaint of the shallow, inflated rhetoricians of the professedly religious world against original genius and apostolic simplicity—the complaint of the babblers of Ephesus against St. John—the

protest of all scholastic and pedantic systems against the freeness and the breadth of a greater than John or Isaiah. Such Divine utterances have always appeared defective, and unimpassioned, and indefinite, in the ears of those who crave a wilder excitement, and more elaborate systems; but they have found, for that very reason, a sure response in the childlike, genuine, natural soul of every age.

But while the most simple, Isaiah is yet the most eloquent, the most dramatic, the most poetic, in one word, the most complete, of the prophetic bards of Israel. He has not the bearded majesty of Moses, the gorgeous natural description of Job, Ezekiel's rough and rapid vehemence, David's high gusts of lyric enthusiasm, Daniel's awful allegory, John's piled and enthroned thunders; his power is solemn, sustained, at once measured and powerful; his step moves gracefully, at the same time that it shakes the wilderness. His imagery is seldom snatched from the upper regions of the ethereal, from the terrible crystal or the stones of fire, from the winged cherubim or the eyed wheels, from the waves of the glassy sea, or the blanched locks of the Ancient of Days, but from lower though lofty objects, from the glory of Lebanon, the excellency of Sharon, the waving forests of Carmel, the willows of Kedron, the flocks of Kedar, and the rams of Nebaioth. His prophecy opens with sublime complaint; it swells into noble anger, it subdues into irony, it melts into pathos; but its general tone is that of victorious exultation. It is one long rapture. You see its author standing on an eminence, bending forward over the magnificent prospect it commands, and with clasped hands, and streaming eyes, and eloquent sobs, indicating his excess of joy. What is true of all the prophets, that they frequently seem to *see* rather than to *foresee*, is especially true of Isaiah. Not merely does his mind overleap ages, and take up centuries as a "little thing" but his *eye* overleaps them too, and seems literally to *see* the word Cyrus inscribed on his banner, the river Euphrates

turned aside, the cross and Him who bare it. We have little doubt that many of his visions became objective, and actually painted themselves upon his eye. The expression *he saw* is applied peculiarly to Isaiah. "The vision of Isaiah, which he saw." "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw." "These things said Esaias, when *he saw* His glory, and spake of Him." The word "vision" belongs especially to Isaiah, as he seems to behold vividly that of which he speaks.

ASSYRIAN ARMLET.

He was a prince amid a generation of princes, a Titan among a tribe of Titans; and of all the prophets who rose on aspiring pinions to meet the Sun of Righteousness, it was for him, the Evangelical Eagle, to mount the highest, and to catch on his wing the richest anticipation of His rising. It was for him to pierce most clearly the abyss of the future, and become an eye-witness of the great events enclosed in its womb. He is the Divine describer of a Divine panorama. His sermons are not compositions, but cries, from one who "sees a sight you cannot see, and hears a voice you cannot hear." He realizes the old name which gradually merged in that of prophet—"seer." He is an eye running to and fro throughout the future; and as you contemplate him, you feel what a power was that sight of the olden prophets, which pierced the thickest vails, found the turf thin and the tombstone transparent, saw into the darkness of the past, the present, and the future—the hidden recesses of the human heart—the folds of destruction itself; that sight which in Ezekiel bare the blaze of the crystal and the eyes of the wheels, which in Daniel read at a glance the hieroglyphics of heaven, and which in John blenched not before the great white throne. Many eyes are glorious; that of beauty, with its mirthful or melancholy meaning; that of the poet, rolling in its fine

frenzy; that of the sage, worn with wonder, or luminous with mild and settled intelligence; but who shall describe the eye of the prophet, across whose mirror swept the shadows of empires, stalked the ghosts of kings, stretched in their loveliness the landscapes of a regenerated earth, and lay in its terror, red and still, the image of the judgment-seat of Almighty God? Then sight, the highest faculty of matter or of mind, comes culminating to an intense and dazzling point, and the finite for the moment trembles upon the verge of Omniscience itself.

Exultation, we have said, is the pervading spirit of Isaiah's prophecy. His are the "prancings of a mighty one." Has he to tread upon idols? he not only treads but tramples and leaps upon them. Witness the irony directed against the stock and stone gods of his country, in the forty-fourth chapter. Does he describe the downfall of the Assyrian monarch? it is to the accompaniment of wild and hollow laughter from the depths of Hades, which is "moved from beneath" to meet and welcome his coming. Great is his glorying over the ruin of Babylon. With a trumpet voice he inveighs against the false fastings and other superstitions of his age. As the panorama of the millennial day breaks in again and again upon his eye, he hails it with an unvaried note of triumphant anticipation. Rarely does he mitigate his voice, or check his exuberant joy, save in describing the sufferings of Christ. Here he shades his eyes, holds in his breath, and furls his wing of fire. But so soon as he has passed the hill of sorrow, his old rapturous emotions come upon him with two-fold force, and no pæan in his prophecy is more joyous than the fifty-fourth chapter. It rings like a marriage-bell.

The uniform grandeur, the pomp of diction, the profusion of imagery, distinguishing this prophet, would have lessened his power over the common Christian mind, had it not been for the evangelical sentiment in which his strains abound, and

which has gained for him the name of "the Fifth Evangelist." Many bear with Milton solely for his religion. It is the same with Isaiah. The Cross stands in the painted window of his style. His stateliest figure bows before Messiah's throne. An eagle of the sun, his nest is in Calvary. Anticipating the homage of the Eastern sages, he spreads out before the infant God treasures of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The gifts are rare and costly, but not too precious to be offered to such a Being; they are brought from afar, but He has come farther "to seek and to save that which was lost.

The general objects of Isaiah's mission are best indicated in the account which he has left us of his call to the prophetical office. "In the year that King Uzziah died," the fifty-second year of that long reign, as the life of the aged king, now on the verge of seventy, was drawing to its close in the retirement of the house of lepers, the young Isaiah was, or in vision seemed to be, in the court of the Temple. He stood at the gate of the porch, and gazed straight into the Holy Place, and into the Holy of Holies itself. All the intervening obstacles were removed. The great gates of cedar-wood were thrown open, the many-colored veil that hung before the innermost sanctuary was drawn aside, and deep within was a throne as of a king, high and lifted up, towering as if into the sky. What was the form that sat thereon, here, as elsewhere, the Scripture forbears to describe. Only by outward and inferior images, as to us by secondary causes, could the Divine Essence be expressed. The long drapery

SOLDIER.

of his train filled the temple, as "His glory fills the earth." Around the throne, as the cherubs on each side of the mercy-seat, as the guards round the king, with head and feet veiled, floated the figures of the seraphim, themselves glowing with the glory of which they were a part, whilst vast wings enfolded their faces and their feet, and supported them in mid-air round the throne. From side to side went up a hymn of praise, which has since been incorporated in the worship of Christendom, and which expressed that He was there who bore the great Name by which God was specially known in the period of the Jewish monarchy and in the Prophetical order—"the Lord of Hosts." The sound rang like thunder to the extremity of the Temple. The pillars of the gateway trembled, as if in an earthquake-shock, and the whole building within grew dark as with the smoke of a vast sacrifice. It was a sight and sound which the youthful Isaiah recognized at once as the intimation of Divinity. It was the revelation of the Divine Presence to him, as that of the burning bush to Moses, or of the still small voice to Elijah—the inevitable prelude to a prophetic mission, couched in the form most congenial to his own character and situation. To him, the Royal Prophet of Jerusalem, this manifestation of royal splendor was the almost necessary vesture in which the Spiritual Truth was to be clothed. His own sin and the sins of his nation passed before him, and he said, "Woe is me, for I am lost, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." A Rabbinical tradition took possession early of the Christian Church, that his sin had been an acquiescence in the sin of Uzziah, and that the gift of prophecy had been then removed from him, and was now to be restored. But doubtless it was not any special sin, but his *sinfulness* and the sinfulness of his people that he deplored; and then upon his polluted lips the purifying touch was laid. From the flaming altar the flaming

seraph brought a flaming coal. This was the creation, so to speak, of that marvelous style which has entranced the world; the burning furnace which warms, as with a central fire, every variety of his addresses. Then came the voice from the sanctuary, saying, "Whom shall I send, who will go for us?" With unhesitating devotion, the youth replied, "Here am I; send me." The very words of his acceptance express the ready obedience of an apostle, not obedience only, but a willing offer of service. And the seraphim touching his lips, admitting him as it were into their company about the throne, burning with seraphic knowledge; and the live coal from the altar; how it all expresses the character of his prophecies; conveying by his words a holy flame into the cold hearts of men, to inspire them with love and Divine knowledge, purifying their hearts as by fire, and this too from the altar of God, the altar of the Divine sacrifice of Jesus.

ASSYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN SOLDIERS.

The Spirit of God marks His manifestations, by sensible signs; by the dove at our Lord's baptism; by the fiery and cloven tongues at Pentecost; He speaks, in the call of Isaiah, through the altar-coal of the seraphim. And as music partakes of the character of the instrument on which it is played, so the temper of the prophet was no doubt suited to the heavenly hand and the finger of God. The very mode in which their mission was conveyed, characterized the prophets

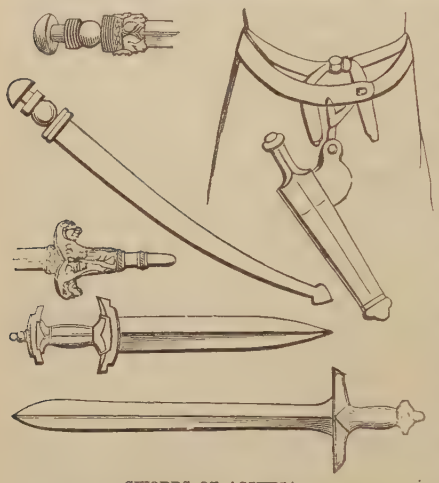
Ezekiel was given to eat of the roll; the mouth of Jeremiah was touched by the hand of the Lord, giving him power of speech; but Isaiah was thus set apart by a yet more solemn and sublime consecration, by the vision of Christ in His Church. By Moses in the burning bush Christ was seen as the Everlasting God; by the children of Israel as the Judge, in the terrors of Mount Sinai; by St. Stephen standing on the right hand of God, to aid; by St. Paul in brightness beyond the sun, to convince; by St. John in the Apocalypse, as the High Priest that liveth forever; but by Isaiah as sitting on the throne of His kingdom, and the whole earth full of His glory; and then receiving from the hands of the seraphim his commission with a loving faith, not as a prophet only, but one might say as an evangelist and apostle.

In the words that follow is represented the whole of the prophet's career. First, he is forewarned of the forlorn hopelessness of his mission. The louder and more earnest his cry, the less will they hear and understand—the more clearly he sets the vision of truth before them, the less will they see. "Make the heart of this people gross, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and be converted and healed." These mournful words, five times repeated in the New Testament as the description of the Jewish people in its latest stage of decay, were doubtless true in the highest degree of that wayward generation to which Isaiah was called to speak. His spirit sank within him as he asked, "O Lord, how long?" The reply unfolded at once the darker and brighter side of the future. Not till successive invasions had wasted the cities, not till the houses had been left without a human being within them, not till the land had been made desolate with desolation, would a better hope dawn; not till the invasions of Pekah and Sennacherib had done their work, not till ten out of the twelve tribes had been removed far away, and there should have been a

great forsaking in the midst of the land, would he be relieved from the necessity of delivering his stern, but fruitless warnings, against the idolatry, the dullness, the injustice of his people. But widely spread and deeply seated as was the national corruption, there was still a sound portion left, which would live on and flourish. As the aged oak or terebinth of Palestine may be shattered, and cut down to the very roots, and yet out of the withered stumps a new shoot may spring forth, and grow into a mighty and vigorous tree, so is the holy seed, the faithful few, of the chosen people. This is the true consolation of all ecclesiastical history. It is a thought which is but little recognized in the earlier and ruder stages of the race and the Church, when the inward and outward are easily confounded together. But it is the very message of life to a more refined and complex age, and it was the key-note to the whole of Isaiah's prophecies. It had, indeed, been Divinely indicated to Elijah, in the announcement of the few who had not bowed the knee to Baal, and in the still small whisper which was greater than thunder, earthquake and fire. But in Isaiah's time it first, if we may say so, became a living doctrine of the Jewish Church, and through him an inheritance of the Christian Church. "A remnant." This was his watchword. "The remnant shall return." This was the truth constantly personified before him in the name of his eldest son. A remnant of good in the mass of corruption, a remnant saved from the destructive invasions of Assyria, a burst of spring-time in the reformation of Hezekiah; and far away in the distant future, a rod out of the stem, the worn-out stem of Jesse—a branch, a faithful branch, out of the withered root of David; "and the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose, it shall blossom abundantly, even with joy and singing, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Such was the hope and trust which sustained the prophet through his sixty years of toil and conflict. In the weakness

of Ahaz, in the calamities of Hezekiah, under the tyranny of Manasseh, Isaiah remained firm and steadfast to the end. Wider and wider his views opened, as the nearer prospects of his country grew darker and darker. First of the prophets in this gospel illumination, he and those who followed him seized with unreserved confidence the mighty thought, that not in the chosen people, so much as in the nations outside of it, was to be found the ultimate well-being of man, the surest favor of God. Truly might the Apostle say that Isaiah was "very bold,"—"bold" beyond all that had gone before him—in enlarging the boundaries of the Church; bold with that boldness, and large with that largeness of view, which so far from weakening the hold on things Divine, strengthens it to a degree unknown in less comprehensive minds. For to him also, with a distinctness which makes all other anticipations look pale in comparison, a distinctness which grew with his advancing years, was revealed the coming of a Son of David, who should restore the royal house of Judah and gather the nations under its scepter. If some of these predictions belong to that phase of the Israelite hope of an earthly empire, which was doomed to disappointment and reversal, yet the larger part point to a glory which has been more than realized. Lineament after lineament of that Divine Ruler was gradually drawn by Isaiah, until at last a Figure stands forth, so marvelously combined of power and gentleness and suffering, as to present in the



SWORDS OF ASSYRIA.

united proportions of his descriptions the moral features of an historical Person, such as has been by universal confession known once, and once only, in the subsequent annals of the world.

All the history of our Lord's coming in the flesh is here to be found; the forerunner preparing the way before Him, His birth of a virgin as our Immanuel; His flight into Egypt; His gentle mode of teaching, with no strife nor crying, nor voice heard in the streets; His miracles of healing, giving sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf; all the particulars of His suffering, as by an eye-witness, the man of sorrows, set at naught, wounded, smitten, stricken, yet silent as a lamb brought to the slaughter; His death and burial; His resurrection, and His sending of the Comforter; the call of the Gentiles; and His coming again to judgment; and in conclusion of all, the final state of the good and of the wicked, the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched. All these he describes expressly. But more than all is his prophecy pervaded and illuminated with the Gospel; the vision, the rapt vision of the things of God is so peculiarly his. He is full of warnings and of judgments; and in his near admission to the throne of God, clouds and darkness are round about him; but every cloud is full of light, every judgment is lined or penetrated with the Gospel, its comforts and its glory.

The task laid upon the prophet was difficult, the times were dark. But his reward has been, that in spite of the opposition, the contempt, and the ridicule of his contemporaries, he has in after ages been regarded as the messenger, not of sad, but of good tidings, the Evangelical Prophet, the Prophet of the Gospel, in accordance with the meaning of his own name, which he himself regarded as charged with prophetic significance, "the Salvation of Jehovah," or "Divine Salvation."

No other prophet is so frequently cited in the New Testament, for none other so nearly comes up to the Spirit of Christ and the Apostles. When the Gospel was first preached, the

testimony of Isaiah was referred to as if he had been already the teacher of it all. As soon as John the Baptist begins to preach, he refers to the Prophet Isaiah as calling him the "voice crying in the wilderness." When the Bible was given to our Lord Himself to read, in His first preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth, it was the Prophet Isaiah from which He read, when He said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." And when He went from thence to Capernaum, the Evangelist quotes the Prophet Isaiah, describing his going as the light springing up in the dark land. When the Baptist sent two of his disciples to inquire if He were the Christ, our Lord called their attention to those particular works which Isaiah had described in the Messiah. And He Himself, when there rejected, said, "Well did Esaias prophesy of you." When the Spirit sent Philip to convert the Ethiopian Eunuch, it was in the Prophet Isaiah that he was reading of Christ. When St. Paul first taught at Rome, it was the testimony of Isaiah which he pointed out to his countrymen; it was to the same Prophet Isaiah he had so often appealed before in his Epistle to the Romans. And thus it has continued to the present time in the Church. No other single teacher of the Old Dispensation, David only excepted, has so worked his way into the heart of Christendom. When Augustine asked Ambrose which of the sacred books was best to be studied after his conversion, the answer was "Isaiah." Jerome speaks of wishing to expound him as rather an apostle and evangelist than a prophet; as being himself one of those of whom he says, "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those that preach the Gospel of peace." The greatest musical composition of modern times, embodying more than any single confession of faith, the sentiments of the whole Christian Church, is based in far the larger part on the prophecies of Isaiah. The wild tribes of New Zealand seized his magnificent strains as if belonging to their own national songs, and chanted them from hill to hill, with all

the delight of a newly-discovered treasure. And as in his age, so in our own, he must be pre-eminently regarded as the "bard rapt into future times." None other of ancient days so fully shared with the modern philosopher, or reformer, or pastor, the sorrowful yet exalted privilege of standing, as we say, "in advance of his age," "before his time." Through his prophetic gaze we may look forward across a dark and stormy present to the onward destiny of our race, to what must be the hope of each aspiring soul, "when the eyes of them that see shall not be dim; when the ears of them that hear shall

MOUNT HOR.

hearken; when the vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful; when the liberal shall devise liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand; when Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim; when thine eyes shall behold the King in his beauty, and see the land that is very far off."

Isaiah uses great plainness of speech in alluding to the vices and sins of his time. The moderation and equality of earlier days were now widely departed from, and he denounces those who "join house to house, and lay field to field, that they

may be placed alone in the midst of the earth." He gives an elaborate picture of the ornaments of the fine ladies of Jerusalem. He foretells a day when "the Lord would take away the bravery of the ankle-bands, and the caps of net-work, and the crescents; the pendants, and the bracelets, and the veils; the turbans, and the ankle-chains, and the girdles, and the smelling-bottles, and the amulets; the signet-rings, and the nose jewels; the holiday dresses and the mantles, and the robes and the purses; the mirrors, and the tunics, and the head-dresses, and the large veils." A plain, unaffected gait would have been far too simple for ladies carrying such a load of artificial ornament: the neck stretched out, the eyes rolling wantonly, and a mincing or tripping step, complete the picture drawn by the plain-spoken prophet, and show to what a depth of folly woman may sink through love of finery.

Isaiah tells us that drunkenness prevailed in his time to a frightful extent, and revels occurred nightly, in which drinking, dancing and music united to excite the passions, while bacchanalian scenes of the most revolting character were the common amusement of the upper classes. Judges took bribes openly, and the rich ground the faces of the poor, and with heartless indifference sent them forth to suffer and die; and the nobles were "companions of thieves." "The whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint." "Ah, sinful nation!" he exclaims, "a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters; from the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it." In the midst of such abounding wickedness, the prophet lifted his warning voice. He made the dissolute capital tremble with his bold accusations and terrible denunciations.

Isaiah lived in troublous times. In his life occurred the invasion of the great Syrian conqueror, Sennacherib. This heathen monarch sent a letter full of boastful threats in order to strike terror into the heart of Hezekiah and his subjects. Under this trial the simple trusting faith of the Jew

ish king shone forth. He took the letter, and penetrating, as it would seem, into the Most Holy Place, laid it before the Divine Presence enthroned above the cherubs, and called upon Him whose name it insulted, to look down and see with His own eyes the outrage that was offered to Him. From that dark recess no direct answer was vouchsafed. The answer came through the mouth of Isaiah. From the first moment that Sennacherib's army had appeared, he had held the same language of unbroken hope and confidence, clothed in every variety of imagery. At one time it was the rock of Zion amidst the raging flood. At another, it was the lion of Judah, roaring fiercely for his prey, undismayed by the multitude of rustic shepherds gathered round to frighten him.

HEAD-DRESS OF RIDING-HORSE.

At another, it is the everlasting wings of the Divine protection, like those of a parent bird brooding over her young against the great Birdsnester of the world, whose hand is in every nest, gathering every egg that is left, till no pinion should be left to flutter, no beak left to chirp. Or again, it is the mighty cedar of Lebanon, with its canopy of feathering branches, which yet shall be hewn down with a crash that shall make the nations shake at the sound of his fall; whilst the tender branch and green shoot shall spring up out of the dry and withered stump of the tree of Jesse, which shall take root downward and bear fruit upward. Or again, it is the contest between the Virgin Queen, the impregnable daughter of Zion, sitting on her mountain fastness, shaking her head in noble scorn, and the savage monster, the winged bull, which had come up against her—led captive with a ring in his nostrils, to turn him back by the way by which he came.

The evening closed in on what seemed to be the devoted city. The morning dawned, and with the morning came the tidings that they were delivered. "It came to pass that night, that the angel of Jehovah went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and four score and five thousand." By whatever mode accomplished—whether plague or tempest, the deliverance was complete and final. The Assyrian king at once returned, and according to the Jewish tradition, wreaked his vengeance on the Israelite exiles whom he found in Mesopotamia. He was the last of the great Assyrian conquerors. No Assyrian host again crossed the Jordan. Within a few years the Assyrian power suddenly vanished from the earth. Sennacherib himself was murdered by his sons while worshiping in the temple of Nineveh. Upon this event we have the prophet's hymn of thanksgiving—

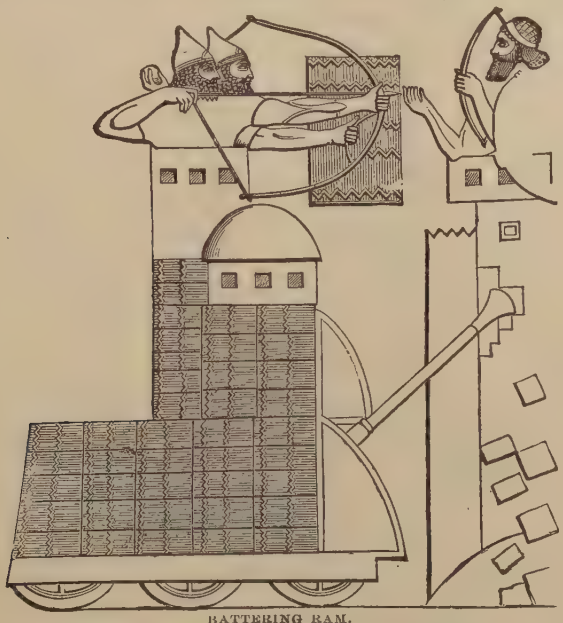
"Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become as one of us?
How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How art thou cut down to the earth, that didst weaken the nations!
Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?
That made the earth as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof?
All the kings of the nations, all of them rest in glory, each one in his house;
But thou art cast out from thy grave like an abominable branch."

The earth again breathes freely. The sacred cedar-grove feels itself once more secure. The world of shades prepares to receive its new inmate.

The effect of this wonderful interposition of God, in the destruction of the Assyrian host, was in proportion to the strain of expectation and apprehension that had preceded it. Isaiah had staked upon his prophetic word the existence of his country, his own and his people's faith in Jehovah. So literally had that word been fulfilled that he himself was regarded, in after times, as the instrument of the deliverance.

A grand burst of national thanksgiving is incorporated in

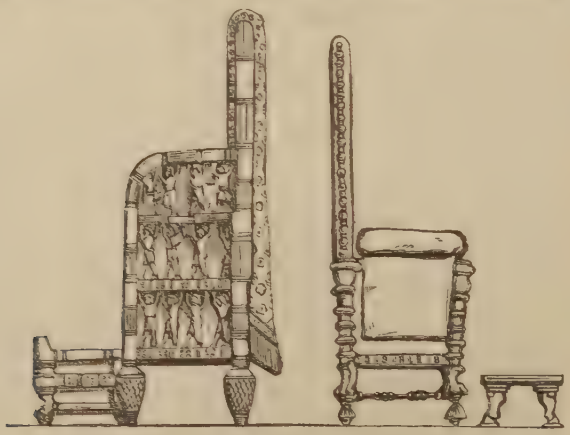
the book of Psalms. "God is our refuge," "God is in the midst of her," "The Lord of hosts is with us," "The God of Jacob is our refuge." The weapons of the great army, such as we see them in the Assyrian monuments, the mighty bow and its lightning arrows, the serried shields, were shattered to pieces. The long array of dead horses, the chariots now useless left to be burnt, the spoils carried off from the dead all rise to view in the recollection of that night. The proud



BATTERING RAM.

have slept their sleep, and the mighty soldiers fling out their hands in vain. The arms have fallen from their grasp. The neigh of the charger, the rattle of the chariot, are alike hushed in the sleep of death. The wild uproar is over, the whole world is silent, and in that awful stillness the Israelites descend from the heights of Jerusalem, like their ancestors to the shores of the Red Sea, to see the desolation that had been wrought on the earth. As then, they carried away the

spoils as trophies. The towers of Jerusalem were brilliant with the shields of the dead. The fame of the fall of Sennacherib's host struck the surrounding nations with terror far and wide. Three centuries afterward, the Psalmist's exulting cry, that an invisible power had "broken the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword and the battle," was repeated in other language, but with the same meaning, by Egyptian priests, who told to Grecian travelers how Sennacherib's army had been attacked by mice, which destroyed the quivers, the arrows, the bows, the handles of the shields. And a statue



THRONES OF SENNACHERIB AND DARIUS.

of the Egyptian king was pointed out in the temple at Memphis, holding in his hand the mouse, with the inscription, "Look at me, and be religious."

That general reflection of the pious Egyptian is common to him and the Jew—the idea of Divine deliverance by whatever agency. "There be more with us than with him; with us is the Lord God, to help us and to fight our battles." By the recollection of this event in their national history, the Maccabees were sustained in their struggle against Antiochus. It is not without reason that in the churches of Moscow the exultation over the fall of Sennacherib is still read on the anniversary

of the retreat of the French from Russia; or that Arnold, in his Lectures on Modern History, in the impressive passage in which he dwells on that great catastrophe, declares that for "the memorable night of frost in which 20,000 horses perished, and the strength of the French army was utterly broken," he "knew of no language so well fitted to describe it as the words in which Isaiah described the advance and destruction of the host of Sennacherib." The grandeur of the deliverance has passed into the likeness of all sudden national escapes. The opening watchword of the Judean psalm of triumph, "God is our refuge and strength," has furnished the inscriptions over the greatest of Eastern churches, the Cathedral of St. Sophia at Constantinople, and the earliest cathedral of the Russian empire at Kieff. And this psalm—the forty-sixth—is the foundation of the most stirring national hymn of western Europe, composed by Luther for his own support, and sung since in all the critical periods of the German nation. Our own times have heard it re-echoed from the bloody fields and triumphal marches of the new German empire.

One of the least religious of English poets, by the mere force of kindred genius, has so entirely, though unconsciously, absorbed into his "Hebrew Melody" the minutest allusions of the contemporary prophets and psalmists, as to make it a fit conclusion for the whole event:

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen;
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill.
And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still.

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride:
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Asshur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

THE PROPHET OF TEARS.

JEREMIAH.

VII.

JEREMIAH.

His Call—Elegy over Josiah—The Friends of Jeremiah—His Likeness to Paul—His Solitude—His Opposition to the Priests and Prophets—His Doctrines—His Firmness—His Sensibility—He Longs for the Desert—A Man of Peace, yet Forced to be a Man of Strife—His Pathos—Impassioned Exhortation—Grandeur of the Prophet—His Spiritual Teaching—The Prophet of the Second Law—His Life Eventful—Decline of Judah—Jeremiah in the Temple—Rise of the Babylonian Empire—Battle of Carchemish—The Policy of Jeremiah—The Prophet's Warnings—His Arrest and Imprisonment—Baruch Recites the Prophecies of Jeremiah—Fury of the King—Burning of the Parchment—The Prophecies Rewritten—Last Struggle of Jeremiah—Invasion—The Prophet Again in Prison—Drawn up from the Well—Buys the Field of Hanameel—Refuses to Leave Palestine—Famous in Jewish Tradition—Patron Saint of Judea—Typical Character.

We are not to look on the prophets only as foretellers of things to come, nor merely as "preachers of righteousness," but also as real living characters in whom Christ speaks by His Holy Spirit. As such, the life of Jeremiah presents much to call forth our sympathy and love, and much that we may seek to imitate in his sweet, Christ-like spirit. We find in him all the conspicuous features of the devout prophetic character—intense consciousness of his own weakness, great susceptibility to varying emotions, a spirit easily bowed down. Left to himself, he might have borne his part among the reforming priests of Josiah's reign, free from their formalism and hypocrisy.

HIS CALL.

But "the word of Jehovah came to him;" and by that Divine voice the secret of his future life was revealed to him,

at the very time when the work of reformation was going on with fresh vigor, when he himself was beginning to have the thoughts and feelings of a man. A life-long martyrdom was set before him, a struggle against kings and priests and people. For a time it would seem that he held aloof from the work which was going on throughout the nation. His name is nowhere mentioned in the history of the memorable eighteenth year of Josiah.

ASSYRIAN BOWMAN.

Though five years had passed since he had entered on the work of a prophet, it is from Huldah, not from him, that the king and his princes seek for counsel. The discovery of the Book of the Law however, could not fail to exercise an influence on a mind like Jeremiah's; his later writings show abundant traces of it; and the result apparently was, that he could not share the hopes which others cherished. He saw that the reformation was but a surface one. Israel had gone into captivity, and Judah was worse than Israel. It was as hard for him as it had been for Isaiah to find among the princes and people who worshiped in the Temple, one just, truth-seeking man. His own work as a priest and prophet led him to discern the falsehood and lust of rule which were at work under the form of zeal. The strange visions which had followed upon his call (ch. 1. v. 11–16) taught him that Jehovah would "hasten" the performance of His word. Hence, though we have hardly any mention of special incidents in the life of Jeremiah during the eighteen years between his call and Josiah's death, the main features of his life come distinctly enough before us. He had even then his experience of the bitterness of the lot to which God had called him. The duties of the priest were merged in those of the new

and special office. Toward the close of the reign, however, he appears to have taken some part in the great national questions then at issue. Josiah, probably following the advice of Jeremiah, chose to attach himself to the new Chaldean kingdom, and lost his life in the vain attempt to stop the progress of the Egyptian king. The encounter took place in the plain of Esdraelon, the scene of so many combats in the earlier history of Israel. No details are given of the battle. Everything is absorbed in the one tragical event which closed it. Josiah was in his chariot, but disguised, according to the practice of the royal families of Israel in moments of extreme emergency. The Egyptian archers, such as we see on their monuments, discharged a volley of arrows against him. He fell; he was placed in his second chariot of reserve, and carried to Jerusalem to die, and was buried in his own sepulcher, according to the usage which had prevailed since the time of Hezekiah. So mournful a death had never occurred in the Jewish annals. All the population of the city and the kingdom attended the funeral.

HELMETS.

ELEGY OVER JOSIAH.

There was an elegy by Jeremiah over the departed king, probably as pathetic as that which David had sung over Saul and Jonathan. Long afterward was that sad day remembered, both as it was celebrated on the field of battle and at Jerusalem. The lamentation of Jeremiah was preserved in the memory of the male and female minstrels, as a national institution, even till long after the return from the captivity. Every family shut itself up and mourned apart. In every household the men and women mourned each apart in their own seclusion. In the prospect of the heaviest calamity that could befall the nation, this was the mourning which recurred to them,

mourning as one mourneth for his only son, in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. The widows were innumerable; the childless mother was left lamenting for her sons slain in battle, she laid herself down to die; the sun of her life went down as it were in mid-day, as in the total eclipse of that fatal year.

THE FRIENDS OF JEREMIAH.

In the midst of the adverse influences which followed upon the death of Josiah—the Sacerdotal and Prophetic orders uniting with the princes in a league of guilt and crime—there was a powerful group, of which the prophet was the center, who adhered to the traditions of better times. Hilkiah, Shaphan, Maaseiah, and Huldah, indeed, were passed away; but their friends or children still remained; and the families especially of Shaphan and Maaseiah formed a powerful society, united by the closest sympathy. The life of the whole circle was the prophet Jeremiah, bound up by various ties of kinship or friendship with almost all of them. Even if his father, Hilkiah, was not the high priest of that name, yet his own priestly descent must have brought them into close connection. His uncle, Shallum, was the husband of the prophetess Huldah, and his friend Hanameel was his cousin, their son. His constant companion was Baruch, the grandson of Maaseiah, and his most powerful protectors, Ahikam and Gedaliah, were the son and grandson of Shaphan. Born in the priestly city of Anathoth, with the influence of these families round him, it might well be said that he was consecrated to his office even from his earliest days. His father had received his birth with a joy of which the remembrance was long preserved, and which strangely contrasted with the dark career of his after life; a joy which yet was fully justified by the greatness and goodness of that life, if not by its happiness. The faithful adherence of his companions through good report and evil, his constant appeals to them for help, the unexpec-

ted aid which, through their intervention, was brought to his rescue, bring out the fascination which he exercised over them, and the tender sympathy which they received from him, so as, more than any other of the ancient prophets, to recall the great Apostle, who "had a thousand friends, and loved each as if he had a thousand souls, and died a thousand deaths when he parted from them."

HIS SOLITUDE.

But it might be said of Jeremiah, even more than of St. Paul, that in spite of these numerous friends, for the greater part of his mission he "had no man like-minded with him." From the first moment of his call he was alone, amidst a hostile world. The nation was against him. In the day when he uttered his lament over Josiah, he lost his last hope in the house of Judah. From that hour the charm of the royal line of David was broken; the institution which had of itself sustained the monarchy had lost its own vital power. The nobles were exasperated against him by his fearless rebukes of their oppression and luxury. Most of all he was hated and cursed—the bitterest trial, in every time—by the two sacred orders to which he himself belonged. He was one of those rare instances in the Jewish history, in which priest and prophet were combined, and by a singularly tragical fate he lived precisely at that age in which both of these great institutions seemed to have reached the utmost point of degradation and corruption; both, after the trials and vicissitudes of centuries, in the last extremity of the nation of which they were the chief supports, broke down and failed. Between the priesthood and the prophets there had hitherto been more or less of a conflict; but now that conflict was exchanged for a fatal union—"a wonderful and horrible thing was committed in the land; the prophets prophesied falsely and the priests bore rule by their means; and the people loved to have it so," and he who by each of his callings was naturally led to sympathize

with both, was the doomed antagonist of both—victim of one of the strongest of human passions, the hatred of priests against a priest who attacks his own order, the hatred of prophets against a prophet who ventures to have a voice and a will of his own. His own village of Anathoth, occupied by members of the sacred tribe, was for him a nest of conspirators against his life. Of him the saying was literally fulfilled, "a prophet hath no honor in his own birth-place."

ASSYRIAN SHIELDS.

HIS DOCTRINES.

And, as often has happened in like case, the misfortune of his position was aggravated by the necessity of opposing the general current of popular prejudice, and professional narrowness, not merely in its grosser forms of selfishness and superstition, but in those points where it merely carried to excess feelings which were in themselves good, and which had in an earlier age been sanctioned by the noblest examples and most fruitful results. In the altered circumstances of his age, he could no longer be what Isaiah had been: nay, that unshaken belief in the inherent invincible strength of Jerusalem which Isaiah had preached, and which the prophets still repeated after Isaiah with a constant and not unnatural confidence, it was the duty of Jeremiah to oppose. Even the yet diviner truth of the possibility of restoration for the most hardened character, which Isaiah had set forth in words whose fire

lives to this day, was to Jeremiah overclouded by the sense of the ingrained depravity which seemed to have closed up every entrance to the national conscience. The message, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," was exchanged for the desponding cry, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" The free will of Isaiah and the fatality of Jeremiah were each true for the moment, each liable to exaggeration by those who will not make allowance for the effects of changed circumstances. There are times when ancient truths become modern falsehoods, when the signs of God's dispensations are made so clear by the course of natural events as to supersede the revelations even of the most sacred past, or to demand for those revelations a new interpretation and an application suited to the present time. Jeremiah saw his country, not as he wished and hoped it to be, but as it really was: he was prepared not merely to admit as an inscrutable fate, but to proclaim as his heaven-sent message, that Jerusalem was doomed. He was to acknowledge that the Temple, with all its hallowed associations, was of no avail; that the newly discovered law had come too late. In the reformation of Josiah, which fills so large a space in the historical narrative, he took no part, as though feeling it to be merely a superficial cure that had not probed the deeper moral evil within, which he never ceases to denounce and lay bare. He was to look the shortcomings of his country and his church full in the face, and not shrink from accepting their extremest consequences. When the northern kingdom fell, Hosea's hope could still be sustained by the reflection that Judah was safe. When Amos and Isaiah attacked the priesthood of Judah, they still felt that there remained the prophets on whom the nation could fall back. But when Jeremiah mourned for Israel, he felt that there was no reserve in Judah. And when the priesthood closed in hostile array around him, he felt that, as far as Jerusalem was concerned, the

prophets were no supporters. He was himself the last of those gifted seers, who combined their prophetic teaching with the active public life of statesmen and counselors of the nation.

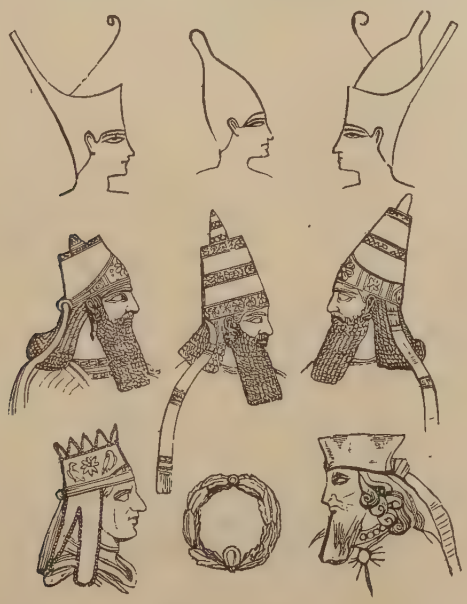
HIS FIRMNESS.

Against this fate, "against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes, against the priests," against the prophets, "against the people of the land," he was "to gird up his loins, and arise and speak;" he was to be the solitary fortress, the column of iron, the wall of brass, fearless, undismayed, unconfounded, the one grand, immovable figure, which alone redeems the miserable downfall of his country from triviality and shame—for forty years, day by day, at early morning, standing to deliver his mournful warnings, his searching rebukes, in the royal chamber or in the Temple court. He was the prophet of unwelcome, unpalatable truth from whose clear vision all illusions had vanished away; in whom the high poetic aspirations of former times were transformed into the hard prose of common life: yet a prose which itself becomes more poetical than poetry, because of its own exceeding tragical simplicity.

HIS SENSIBILITY.

But here another element enters into his history, which gives a yet deeper tone to its melancholy interest. For this desperate and solitary career we see no longer the wild romantic energy of an Elijah, nor the royal air and majesty of an Isaiah. Of all the prophets, Jeremiah is the most retiring, the most plaintive, the most closely compassed with ordinary human weaknesses. The cry which he uttered in the moment of his call, when the dark truth first broke upon his young mind, was characteristic of his whole career; "Ah! Lord God! I cannot speak; I am but a child!" It is this child-like tenderness which adds force to the severity of his denunciation, to the bitterness of his grief. His was not one

of those stern characters which bear without repining the necessary evils of life. He who was to be hard as brass and strong as iron, who had to look with unmoved countenance on the downward descent of his country, yet gave utterance to the wide wish of sorrow, "Oh! that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." He, whose task it was to run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem,



ASSYRIAN CROWNS.

like the Grecian sage, to see if he could find a single honest man—to live, as it were, in the market-place as a butt of scorn alike from the religious and irreligious world—he was by nature and inclination the prophet of the desert, he longed for a "lodge[1] in some vast wilderness," that he might leave his people, and avoid the sight of their crimes, and be no longer exposed to their deceit and treachery and wickedness.

1 Jeremiah ix: 2.

Nothing can be more touching than to see one who hated publicity, and longed for quietness, and rest, and privacy and obscurity, yet forced to be conspicuous, forced to occupy a public station where he became a target for every arrow. His constant imagery is taken from those lonely regions where he would fain be, "their bare hills, swept by the dry wind, where there was no human being, nor bird of the heavens to be seen"; where wolf, and lion, and panther prowled; where the untamable wild asses galloped up to the highest peaks, and snuffed up the sultry air; where the heath grows on the parched places, in a salt land, and not inhabited. He stood apart from the almost invariable usage of the Jewish priesthood, by remaining in a life of celibacy, joining neither in the common assemblages of mourning nor of feasting. The austere habits of the Arabian Rechabites attracted his admiration, and drew down his emphatic benediction. "It was good for him to bear the yoke even from his youth. He sits alone and keeps silence, crouching under his burden." Through the chambers of his innermost heart there is a shudder. His griefs pierce like a flight of arrows into his soul. He is overwhelmed with despair at the thought that he, the gentle, the unselfish, should be a man of war and a man of contention to the whole country; that he who had never joined the assembly of the mockers, but found his delight in God's moral law, should be tormented by this perpetual pain, this incurable wound that refuses to be healed.

> "The time is out of joint; O cursed spite,
> That ever I was born to set it right."

Such is the burden of his fainting heart. He doubts as to the truth of God. "O, Lord, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived." "O, Lord Jehovah, Thou hast greatly deceived this people." This is ever the tendency of ingenuous and sensitive souls, when wickedness seems to triumph, and the promises of God appear to go unfulfilled, especially when in the Church itself, combinations of evil men use the cloak of religion and the machinery of the Church to accomplish their

own selfish ends, and hypocrisy and deceit and treachery and malignity and the lust of power seem to bear uncontrolled sway. Jeremiah, with his shrinking nature, did not escape this temptation. And in his agony he heaps curses on the day of his birth, curses on the innocent messenger who brought the news of his birth: "Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labor and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame." He loses all confidence in himself. He feels that "the way of man is not in himself; that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." "O Lord, correct me—but with judgment—not in Thine anger, lest Thou bring me to nothing." At times he is stung beyond endurance into imprecations, as fierce and bitter, on his country and on his opponents, as ever came from the lips of Deborah or of David. At times he condescends to the meaner arts of secresy and falsehood. The shortcomings of the prophets amongst whom he lived were shared by himself. Opposing their spirit, differing from them by nature, gentle while they were cruel, noble while they were base, yet in the bitterness of his conflict with them, he sometimes sank to their level, and the purity of his character was sullied by the foul breath of their selfishness and hypocrisy. Of him, as of Elijah and of all the great men of God who pass before us in the pages of Divine revelation, it must be said, that "he was of like passions with ourselves."

HIS PATHOS.

It is this deep despondency and misery of Jeremiah that have caused his name to pass into a proverb for unavailing sorrow. The pathos of his style is most touching. His is that melting figure of Rachel, weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not. His is that appeal to Ephraim, "Is he my dear son? is he a pleasant child?" which sounds like the yearning of God's own bowels His is the plaintive question, "Is there no balm in Gilead, is

there no physician there?" and the sorrowful ejaculation "the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." And it is he, the "weeping prophet," who asks, "is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?"

His chief power, besides pathos, is impassioned exhortation. His prophecy is one long application. He is distinguished by powerful and searching practicalness. He is urgent, vehement, to agony. His "heart is broken" within him. His "bones shake," he is "like a drunken man," because of the Lord, and the word of His holiness. His fury often singles out the lying prophets, and ignorant pretenders to the prophetic gift, who now abounded in the kingdom of Judah. Like an eagle plucking from the jackdaw his own shed plumes, does Jeremiah lay about him in his righteous rage. Their dull dreams he tears in pieces, for "what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord." For their feigned burdens he substitutes a weight of wrath and contempt. Mingled with this ardor of spirit, and earnestness of appeal, there are touches of poetic grandeur. Witness the picture, in the fourth chapter, of the tokens attesting the forthcoming of the Lord to vengeance. Chaos comes again over the earth. Darkness covers the heavens. The everlasting mountains tremble. Man disappears from below, and the birds fly from the darkened air. Cities become ruins, and the fruitful places wildernesses, before the advancing anger of the Lord. Compare Byron's darkness with this picture. It is a massing of horrible circumstances, each adding something to the terror and sublimity of the whole. Jeremiah performs his task with two or three strokes; but they are strokes of lightning.

Once the prophet mounts a lofty peak, whence the lands of God's fury, the neighboring idolatrous countries, are commanded, and pours out lava streams of invective upon their inhabitants. It is a true martial fire which inspires his descriptions of carnage and desolation. In his own language, he is a "lion from the swellings of Jordan, coming up against

the habitation of the strong." All tears are now wiped from his face. There is a fury in his eye which makes you wonder if aught else were ever there; it is mildness maddened into a holy and a fearful frenzy. In a noble rage, he strips off the bushy locks of Gaza, dashes down the proud vessel of Moab, consumes Ammon, makes Esau bare, breaks the bow of Elam, and brandishes again, and again, and again, a sword over Babylon, crying out at each new blow,

> "A sword is upon the Chaldeans:
> A sword is upon the liars:
> A sword is upon her mighty men;
> A sword is upon their horses;
> A sword is upon her treasures."

We have difficulty in recognizing the weeper among the willows in this homicidal energy, all of whose tears have been turned into devouring fire.

But how, in the Lamentations, the prophet pours out his heart in deep melodies of desolation, mourning and woe! The scene is Jerusalem lying in heaps; the poet, the child of holy inspiration, appears upon the ruins, and with notes of desolation and woe, strikes his harp to the fallen fortunes of his country. It was not that the pleasant land now lay waste—and it did lie waste; it was not that the daughters of Jerusalem were slain, and her streets ran red—and they did run red; but it was the Temple—the Temple of the Lord, with its altars, its sanctuary, its holy of holies leveled to the ground—rubbish where beauty stood, ruin where strength was: its glory fled, its music ceased, its solemn assemblies no more, and its priesthood immolated, or carried far away. These had shed their glory over Israel, and over all the land, and it was the destruction of these which gave its tone of woe to the heart of the Israelite indeed. Yet the feelings which fill his heart to bursting are of a complicated character. A sense of Israel's past glory mingles with a sense of her guilt; he weeps over

her ruin the more bitterly that it is self inflicted. There is no protest against the severity of the Divine judgments, and yet no patriot can more keenly appreciate, vividly describe, or loudly lament the splendors that were no more. We can conceive an angrier prophetic spirit finding a savage luxury in comparing the deserted streets and desecrated shrines of Jerusalem with his own predictions, and crying out,—"Did I not foretell all this?" as with swift resounding strides, flaming eye, gaunt cheek and disheveled hair, he passed on his way through them, like the spirit of their desolation, to the wilderness. He looks upon the scene with softer feelings, identifies himself with his country, feels Jerusalem's sword in his own heart, and lingers in fond admiration of its happier times, when the sons of Zion were comparable to fine gold—when her Nazarites were purer than snow, whiter than milk, more ruddy than rubies—when the beloved city was full of people, great among the nations, and a princess among the provinces—the perfection of beauty and the joy of the whole earth.

ASSYRIAN CUPS.

HIS SPIRITUAL TEACHING.

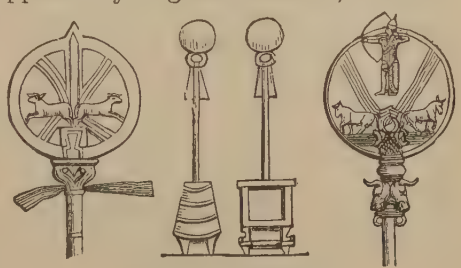
There is a brighter aspect of his mission, which makes itself felt, at times even against his own will, or at least without his own consciousness. He was "set over the nations and the kingdoms," not only "to root out, pull down, destroy and throw down," but also "to build and to plant." In a higher than any merely temporal sense, the constructive part of his theology rose immediately from its destructive elements. He was, as we have seen, the last of the prophet statesmen; he

was projected upon the world out of the failure of the prophetic system. "His heart within him was broken because of the prophets." "The Lord was against the prophets." But this brought out more forcibly than ever the essence of the prophetic spirit in the ruin of its external frame-work. He had no outward signs to which to appeal; even his style, grand though at times it be, never rises to the finish or the magnificence of Isaiah or of Nahum. But this compels him to appeal almost entirely to the moral and spiritual force of his prophetic messages, and these prophetic messages he places on their highest ground. First of the prophets, he proclaims distinctly what had been more or less implied throughout, that predictions were subject to no overruling necessity, but depended entirely on the moral state of those to whom they were addressed; that the most confident assurance of blessing could be frustrated by sin; that the most awful warnings of calamity could be averted by repentance. He showed that the most sacred words of prophecy might, by constant repetition, lose their meaning; that even the very name of "the burden of the Lord," which had summed up the burning thoughts of Amos and Isaiah, was to be discontinued altogether. He showed to the priests who trusted in the Temple, that the day was coming when the very fall of the Temple, the very loss of the ark itself, might be considered a boon. They shall no more say, "the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord; neither shall it come to mind; neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more." The reformation of Josiah he notices only to speak of the uselessness of the much-vaunted discovery of the sacred books. "How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us? Lo, certainly in vain hath He made it; the fear of the scribes is in vain." Yet, if we may trust the arguments by which the Book of Deuteronomy has been connected with that revolution, peculiar interest attaches to the prophet, who stands to Deuteronomy

almost in the same relation as that book stands to the rest of the Pentateuch. Jeremiah is, above everything else, the prophet of the Deuteronomy—of the "Second Law"; not merely from the close connection of outward style, but because he brings out more clearly than any other prophet the spiritual lessons of that, the most spiritual of all the Mosaic books, and looks forward to the time when his people shall be guided by a higher than any merely external law. It is to Jeremiah, even more than to Isaiah, that the writers of the apostolic age look back, when they wish to describe the Dispensation of the Spirit. His predictions of the Anointed King are fewer and less distinct than those of the preceding prophets. But he is the prophet beyond all others of "the New Testament," "the New Covenant"—which first appears in his writings. As in the one glance which he casts forward to the coming Ruler, it is as the just King, the personification of Divine Justice, in contrast to the weak and wayward rule of the unhappy princes that closed the line of Judah, so amidst the degradation of the prophetic and priestly offices, he consoles himself with the thought, that whilst even the Divine Covenant of the ancient law is to be abolished there is to be a new covenant, a new understanding between God and man; a new law, more sacred even than Deuteronomy, written not in any outward book, or by any inspiration of words and letters, but in the hearts and spirits of those who will thus be brought into union with God. And the knowledge of this new truth shall no longer be confined to any single order or caste, but "all shall know the Lord from the least unto the greatest." With this conviction, there was no bound to the extent of his hopes. In the letter they have been but scantily and imperfectly realized, but in the spirit they have been fulfilled more widely than even he ventured to predict; for they were founded on the eternal law of moral progress and spiritual regeneration, more fixed than that "which giveth the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of

the moon and stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when its waves roar." The eulogy of the law in the 119th Psalm, in the peculiar rhythm which marks the poetry of this age of the Jewish Church, is but a prolonged expression of Jeremiah's hope, the transfiguration of the ancient Mosaic system in the sunset of the declining monarchy, before the night will be succeeded by a more glorious dawn. "I see that all things come to an end; but thy commandment is exceeding broad." This is the reward of the truthfulness of his character. To read in the possibilities of the future a balance for the difficulties of the present, was his compensation for the rare gift of seeing things as they really were, through no false or colored medium. He "stood" firmly "on the old ways"; felt their weakness and their strength; saw where they failed and where they were solid, and therefore he was able to look out and discern "the good way" in which henceforth his church and country could walk.

We can only notice a few events in the life of the sweet, sad singer of Israel. We have fuller details of his history than of most of the other prophets. Isaiah, Elijah and Ezekiel, "come like shadows, so depart." We know little of their ordinary life. They appear only on great occasions, and their appearance, like that of a comet, is generally a signal for surprise or terror. We can scarcely conceive of them suffering from common calamities, although sublime agonies are often theirs. Isaiah, in the stocks, instead of turning back the shadow of Ahaz; Ezekiel, drawn up by a rope of rags from a dungeon, instead of being snatched away by the locks of his head toward heaven, seem incongruous conceptions. But



ASSYRIAN ENSIGNS.

we find Jeremiah smitten, put in the stocks, the yoke upon his neck broken; we see him sinking in the mire of the dungeons, and drawn up thence by cords; we find many similar incidents recorded in his history, which add to its humanity, and bring the suffering, solitary man near to us. "Alas! my brother," is our exclamation, as we witness his woes. A brother's voice, now tremulous with grief, now urgent in entreaty, now loud in anger, and now swelling into lofty poetry, sounds down upon us through the solemn centuries of the past, and we grieve that the grave denies us the blessings of a brother's presence, and the pressure of a brother's hand.

DECLINE OF JUDAH.

The struggles of the expiring kingdom of Judah are like those of a hunted animal—now flying, now standing at bay, between two huge beasts of prey, which, whilst their main object is to devour each other, turn aside from time to time to snatch at the smaller victim that has crossed their midway path. It was not now a question of independence, but of choice between two foreign sovereigns, the kings of Egypt and Babylon. In this last decline of the State there were prophets to bear witness to the truth. But the chief monitor was Jeremiah. In the court of the Temple, in the midst of a vast assemblage, headed by the Priestly and Prophetic orders, the prophet rose up and delivered an appeal which contained almost every element of his teaching. It struck the successive chords of invective, irony, bitter grief, and passionate lamentation. It touched on all the topics on which his countrymen would be most sensitive—not only the idolatrous charms by which they hoped to win the favor of the Phenician deities, in whom they perhaps but only half believed, but on the uselessness and impending fall of the ancient institutions, which had seemed to contain a promise of eternal duration—the Temple of Solomon, the Mosaic Ritual, the Royal Sepul-

chers, the Holy City, the Chosen People, the sacred rite of Circumcision. But the main point of his address was when he reminded them of the last signal overthrow of the national sanctuary, and bade them see with their own eyes, not thirty miles from Jerusalem, the desolate state of Shiloh. It was as if the picture of the ruined shrine of Eli and Samuel was too much to be borne by the priests and the prophets who surrounded the Temple court. They closed upon him, as in like manner upon Paul on the same spot six hundred years after. As then, so now, the deliverance of the prophet from the fury of the religious world came from the calmer and juster view of the secular power. The princes or nobles, who in these latter reigns had almost turned the monarchy into an oligarchy, were assembled in the king's palace, when they were summoned by the tumult in the Temple to the judgment-seat, within a gate newly erected, perhaps in Josiah's repairs, and called, in the fervor of his zeal, "The gate of Jehovah." There the prophet pleaded for his life, and the nobles, reckless and worldly as they were, with a deeper sense of justice than his fanatical assailants, solemnly acquitted him.

And now the Assyrian empire vanished from the earth, and in its place arose, in the plenitude of its greatness, the Babylonian empire, under the guidance, first of Nabopolassar, known to us only through the fragments of heathen annalists, and of his greater son, Nebuchadnezzar, who for the the next thirty years, occupies in the horizon of Asia and Egypt the position of Sennacherib, and yet earlier of Rameses II. It seemed to those who witnessed it like the rising of a mighty eagle, spreading out his vast wings, feathering with the innumerable colors of the variegated masses which composed the Chaldean host, sweeping over the different countries, and striking fear in his rapid flight. The main object is Egypt and the unhappy Jewish nation, which, in defiance of prophetic warnings, has allowed Egypt to make it her instrument.

It was at Carchemish, an ancient fortress commanding the passage of the Euphrates, that the collision took place. The Egyptian army had come against it, with all its glittering array of buckler and shield, helmets, spears, and coats of mail, of chariots and horses, from all its subject nations, like the rising flood of its own Nile, and thence was driven back upon itself by the Babylonian host. To the extremities of Egypt, from the cities of the Delta as far as Thebes, the shock was felt. With the retreat of Necho, the whole country of Israel was left open to the invading army. The snorting of the Chaldean horses was heard from the northern frontier at Dan. The whole land trembled at the sound of their neighing. Like a whirlwind, like a torrent, they swept on. The terrified inhabitants retired into the fortified towns. Within the walls of Jerusalem was seen the unwonted sight of Bedouin Rechabites still preserving their Arab customs unchanged in the midst of the capital. The short-sighted rulers had looked for peace, but no good came—for a time of health, and behold trouble.

THE POLICY OF JEREMIAH.

Once more Jeremiah became the center of interest. What course would he, the prophet of the age, take in the face of this impending calamity? To all, except those who took the widest and deepest view of the prospects of the world and of the Church, the stern policy of determined resistance had everything to recommend it. But it was that wider view which presented the whole subject to the prophet's eye in a different aspect. He foresaw, on the one hand, that the immediate pressure of Babylon was irresistible; but on the other hand that it could not last. If Jerusalem could but weather the present storm, he was assured that it would soon pass by; and that then whatever blessings were bound up in the preservation of the House of David and of the Holy City would remain intact. His political position has been

compared to that of Phocion in the presence of the Macedonian power, and to that of the Achæans in the presence of the Roman power. It may still more fitly be compared to that of the Jewish Christians in the time of the Christian era, when the desperate resistance of the Zealots to the armies of Vespasian and Titus hurried on the ruin of the Jewish State, in spite of the prudent Josephus, and of One far other than Josephus, who, like Jeremiah, stood aloof from all the wild

TOMB.

intrigues and conspiracies that would have made Him the chief of a nation of insurgents. It may be compared again to that of the leaders of the Christian Church, in the dissolution of the Roman empire—Augustine, who replied to the taunts of treason brought against the Christians by foreshadowing the rise of the City of God out of the ruins of Rome—Salvian, who by his earnest vindication of the moral government of God, not less than by his wailings over the calamities of the time, has deserved the name of the Jeremiah of his age. It was not indifference to his country, but attach-

ment to its permanent interests, with the yet larger consequences wrapt up in them, which induced him to counsel submission. It was his sense of the inestimable importance of that sacred spot, with its sacred institutions, which caused him to advise every sacrifice for the sake of retaining it. He had the courage, so rare in religious or political leaders, to surrender a part for the sake of preserving the whole—to embrace in his view the complete relations of the great scheme of the world, rather than fix his attention exclusively on the one pressing question of the moment. As there are times when the constitution must be broken to save the commonwealth—when the interests of particular nations or doctrines must give way to the preponderating claims of mankind or of truth at large—so Jeremiah staked the eternal value of the truths which Jerusalem represented against the temporary evils of the Chaldean dominion. It was a bitter pang, but the result seemed to him worth the cost.

> To steel his melting heart
> To act the martyr's sternest part:
> To watch with firm unshrinking eye
> His darling visions as they die,
> Too happy, if, that dreadful day,
> His life be given him for a prey.

His warnings were repeated with more determined energy as the crisis drew nearer. Every common event of life was colored with the hues of the time. The unshaken fidelity of the little colony of Rechabites to their ancestral customs suggested the contrast of the broken vows of Israel. The potter's work in the valley of Hinnom, with its surrounding scenes of the sacrifices of Tophet, filled his mind with lessons of the greatness of the designs of God, guided not by fate or caprice, but by the moral deserts of men. He stood with his scroll in his hand, containing all the prophecies of the last two and twenty years, as though it were a bowl of deadly wine which nation after nation was to drink; and as though he saw king

upon king, and throne upon throne, reeling, staggering, sickening, with the dreadful draught. At every stage of his preaching, the "theological hatred"[1] of the ancient Church grew fiercer and fiercer. He had touched the teachers in their tenderest point by declaring that they had ceased to be necessary. They could not bear to hear that a time was coming when the law should perish from the priest, and counsel from the wise, and the word from the prophet. He on his side, as he seemed to be hemmed in closer and closer, was wound up to a fiercer strain in return. He stood in the accursed valley of Hinnom once again, and from the potter's store held up an earthenware vessel before the shuddering priests and elders, and dashed it in fragments on the ground, with the warning cry that thus should Jerusalem and its people be shivered to pieces. Whilst his hearers stood awe-struck in the valley beneath, the prophet, wrought to a yet loftier pitch, mounted the steep hill-side, and poured forth the same burning invectives within the Temple courts. Then, and not till then, the priestly officer, who had special charge of the Temple, seized him, and immured him in a prison, where he was fixed in a rack or pillory, apparently used as the common punishment of unpopular prophets. For a moment his spirit rose to one of his wildest and sternest denunciations, and then, as if overstrained by the effort, he sank back into the deepest gloom—the gloom of many a lofty soul which feels itself misunderstood by men, which can hardly believe that it is not deserted by God.

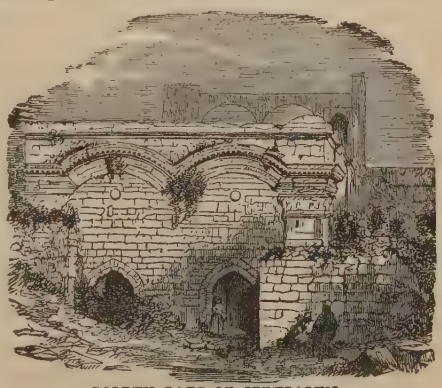
BARUCH.

In this deep distress, one faithful friend is by his side, his Elisha, his Timothy—Baruch, the son of Neriah. In their prison, or their hiding-place, he heard the rumors of the great events which filled the minds and thoughts of the whole people. It was then that the resolution was taken of committing to writing all the scattered prophecies of the last troubled

1 Odium theologicum.

years. Baruch was skilled in the art, and from Jeremiah's dictation, on a roll of parchment, divided into columns, with the ink and the reed which, as a scribe, he always carried with him, he wrote down the impassioned warnings which Jeremiah had already spoken, which were intended, like the newly-discovered Law in Josiah's reign, to warn the king and nobles to a sense of their danger. It was determined to seize the occasion of a public fast to make the hazardous experiment. On that day, a wintry day in December, Baruch appeared in the chamber of a friendly noble, Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, which was apparently over the new gateway already mentioned. There, from the window or balcony of the chamber, or from the platform or pillar on which the kings had stood on solemn occasions, he recited the long alternation of lament and invective to the vast congregation, assembled for the national fast. Micaiah, the son of his host, alarmed by what he heard, descended the Temple Hill, and communicated it to the princes who, as usual through these disturbed reigns, were seated in council in the palace, in the apartments of the chief secretary. One of them, Jehudi, the descendant of a noble house, acted apparently as an agent or spokesman of the rest, and was sent to summon Baruch to their presence. He sat down in the attitude of an Eastern teacher, and as he went on his recital struck terror into the hearts of his hearers. They saw his danger; they charged him and his master to conceal themselves, and deposited the sacred scroll in the chamber where they had heard it, whilst they announced to the fierce and lawless king its fearful contents. A third time it was recited, this time not by Baruch, but by the courtier Jehudi, to the king as he sat warming himself over the charcoal brazier, with his princes standing round him. Three or four columns exhausted the royal patience. He seized a knife, such as Eastern scribes wear for the sake of erasure, cut the parchment into strips, and threw it into the brazier till it was burnt to ashes. Those who had heard from their

fathers of the effect produced on Josiah by the recital of the warnings of Deuteronomy, might well be startled at the contrast. None of those well-known signs of astonishment and grief were seen; neither king nor attendants rent their clothes. It was an outrage long remembered. Baruch, in his hiding-place, was overwhelmed with despair at this failure of his mission. But Jeremiah had now ceased to waver. He bade his timid disciple take up the pen, and record once more the terrible messages. The country was doomed. It was only individuals who could be saved. But the Divine oracle could not be destroyed in the destruction of its outward frame-work. It was the new form of the vision of the "bush burning but not consumed," a sacred book, the form in which Divine truths were now beginning to be known, burnt as sacred books have been burnt again and again in the persecutions of the fourth or of the sixteenth century, yet multiplied by that very cause; springing from the flames to do their work, living in the voice and life of men, even when their outward letter seemed to be lost. "Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, had burned in the fire, and there were added besides unto them many like words." In this record of the prophet's feeling, thus emphasized by his own repetition, is contained the germ of the "Liberty of Unlicensed Printing," the inexhaustible vitality of the written word. This is the first recorded instance of the formation of a



GOLDEN GATE OF JERUSALEM.

canonical book, and of the special purpose of its formation. "The Book" now, as often afterward, was to be the death-blow of the old regal, aristocratic, sacerdotal exclusiveness, as represented in Jehoiakim. The "Scribe," now first rising into importance in the person of Baruch, to supply the defects of the living prophet, was as the printing-press, in far later ages, supplying the defects both of prophet and scribe, and handing on the words of truth which else might have irretrievably perished.

LAST STRUGGLE OF JEREMIAH.

In the revolt of Zedekiah against the Babylonian or Chaldean power, Jeremiah appeared once more in the streets of Jerusalem, with a wooden collar round his neck, such as those by which the chains of prisoners were fastened—a living personification of the coming captivity. In this strange guise he went round to the ambassadors from Phenicia and the trans-Jordanic nations, to the king himself, and finally to the priests in the temple. He was treated alternately as a traitor and a madman. Louder and louder round him rose the cry of the prophets on all sides, in behalf of a determined resistance to the national enemy. At the head of this prophetic band was Hananiah, from the priestly city of Gibeon, and therefore probably, like Jeremiah, a priest. The two prophets stood confronted in the Temple court. On the one side was the watchword, "Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon;" on the other side, "Serve ye the king of Babylon and live." The controversy between them, taking its form from the scene and the audience, turned, as often happens, not on the main principles at issue, but on the comparatively trivial question of the sacred vessels of the Temple; Hananiah maintaining that those which were already gone, would in two years entirely return; Jeremiah, with the sadder and larger view, maintaining that to recall the past was impossible, and that the last hope now was to do the best for the retention of

those that remained to them—not, however, without a pathetic wish that his rival's more hopeful prediction might be fulfilled. For the moment Hananiah seemed to triumph in the superior confidence of his cause. He tore the wooden collar from Jeremiah's neck, and snapped it asunder, as a sign that in two years the deliverance would come. In this conflict of mixed emotions, Jeremiah left the Temple courts, never to return to them. Only to Hananiah he appeared, with the dark warning, that for the broken yoke of wood, he had by his false encouragements forged a still harder yoke of iron, and that within that year he himself should die. He died, in fact, within two months from the time, and in him passed away the last echo of the ancient invincible strain of the age of Isaiah.

INVASION.

The revolt against Babylon continued, and the king of Judah formed an alliance with Egypt, against which Jeremiah in Jerusalem, and Ezekiel from the far East, protested in vain. The Chaldean forces poured into the country. With bitter sighs, with melting hearts, with feeble hands, with fainting spirits, with failing knees, the dreadful tidings were announced. A sword, furbished and sharpened, and glittering, seemed to leap from the Divine scabbard, like that which in the siege of Titus was believed to flame across the heavens. There was a doubt for a moment at the dividing of the great Babylonian roads, whether the army should proceed against Rabbath of Ammon, or Jerusalem of Judah. The Chaldean king stood at the parting of the ways. He made his arrows of divination bright, he consulted with images, he looked on the sacrifice. All the omens pointed to Jerusalem, and to Jerusalem he came. At a lull in the siege, Jeremiah was beaten by order of the Jewish nobles, and then imprisoned in a dungeon. The king secretly caused him to be removed, heard once more his fearless warning and piteous entreaty, and placed him in

a more easy confinement in the court of a prison attached to the palace. The king and the nobles still sent to ask his counsel, and still his answer was the same. He was then taken to the house of one of his most determined enemies, and let down into a deep well, from which the water had been dried, but of which the bottom was deep in slime, into which he sank, and would probably have perished, either from hunger or suffocation. It is difficult not to imagine a connection between this incident and the 69th Psalm: "I sink in the mire where there is no bottom. Deliver me out of the mire that I sink not! let not the well shut its mouth upon me." "Reproach hath broken my heart! I am sick, and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters and I found none." Such a comforter was, however, at hand —one of the Ethiopian guards of the royal harem, known by the name of "the King's Slave." Ebed-melech found the king sitting in the great northern entrance of the Temple, and obtained a revocation of the order; and then, under the protection of a strong guard, proceeded with a detailed care, which the prophet seems gratefully to record, to throw down a mass of soft rags from the royal wardrobe, which were placed under his arm-pits to ease the rough ropes with which he was drawn out of the well. One more secret interview the prophet had with the king, carefully concealed from the imperious nobles, and was then remanded to his former State prison, where he remained secluded during the rest of the siege, though with a certain amount of freedom, and with the companionship of his faithful Baruch. Two striking scenes enlivened this solitude. One was his grateful remembrance of his Ethiopian benefactor, whose safety in the coming troubles he positively predicted. The other was his interview with his cousin Hanameel. He was sitting in the open court which enclosed the prison, with many of the citizens of Jerusalem round him. Suddenly his cousin entered with the offer, startling at that moment of universal confusion, to sell the ances-

tral plot of ground at their native Anathoth, of which, in the fall of their family, Jeremiah was the last and nearest heir. Had the prophet been less assured of the ultimate return of his people, he might well have hesitated at a proposal which seemed only like the mockery that he had before encountered from his townsmen. But he felt assured that the present

ASSYRIAN KING.

cloud would pass away, and with a noble confidence, which has often been compared to that of the Roman senator who bought the ground occupied by the camp of Hannibal, formally purchased the field in the presence of Baruch and the assembled Jews; and then broke out, once and again, first in prose and then in poetry, into the expressions of his perfect conviction, that after the misery of siege and captivity, the

land of Palestine should be again peaceably bought and sold, and that for all future ages the royal family of David and the Levitical tribe should exercise their functions in a spirit of justice never before known within the walls of Jerusalem. It is not the only time in the history of States and churches, that he who has been denounced as a deserter and traitor, becomes in the last extremity the best comforter and counselor. Demosthenes, who had warned his fellow-countrymen in his earlier days against their excessive confidence, in his later days was the only man who could reassure their excessive despondency. Herder, who in his earlier days had been attacked by contemporary theologians as a heretic, was, as years rolled on, invoked as their only help against the rising tide of unbelief. Let all such in every age, accept the omen of mingled darkness and light which marks the vicissitudes of the career of Jeremiah.

We have not space to describe the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. The fame of Jeremiah had penetrated to the camp of the Babylonian king, and Nebuzaradan had arrived at Jerusalem with strict orders to deal kindly with one who, in fact, had deserved so well from Chaldea. He was taken out of his prison, and with the manacles still on his wrists, was hurried away with the mass of captives on the northern road. At the first halting-place, by the hill of Ramah, he was released, with the free choice of a place of high favor in the court of Babylon, or of remaining in Palestine. "He refused," says Josephus, with a glow of patriotic feeling which his own political subserviency had not extinguished, "to go to any other spot in the world, and he gladly clung to the ruins of his country, and to the hope of living out the rest of his life with its surviving relics."

He seems, however, not to have met his death in his native land. When the remnant of the Jews in Palestine fled into Egypt, he would seem to have gone with them. Whether, according to the Christian tradition, he was stoned to death

by his fellow-exiles, or whether, according to the Jewish tradition, he made his escape to Babylon, the Hebrew Scriptures and Josephus are equally silent. But his legendary and traditional fame shows how large a space he occupied henceforward in the thoughts of his countrymen. More than any other of their heroes, he becomes, as has been truly said, the patron saint of Judea. He is the guardian of their sacred relics. The apocryphal books represent him as carrying off with him the sacred fire from the altar; ascending "the mountain of Sinai, where Moses climbed up and saw the heritage of God, and there, in a hollow cave, laying the tabernacle, the ark, and the altar of incense, and closing the door until the time that God shall gather His people again together, and receive them into mercy." He appears in a vision to Judas Maccabeus, "with gray hairs, exceeding glorious, of a wonderful and excellent majesty, with a sword of gold in his right hand, a gift from God" to the patriot warrior, "wherewith he shall wound the adversaries." That peculiar intercessory mediation which even those who most feared and detested him, believed that he possessed in life, he was thought to exercise with yet more potent efficacy after his death—"a lover of the brethren, who prayeth much for the people and for the Holy City, Jeremiah the Prophet of God." As time rolled on, he became the chief representative of the whole prophetic order. By some he was placed at the head of all the prophets in the Jewish canon. His spirit was believed to live on in Zechariah and in all the prophetical writings which could not be traced back to their real author. At the time of the Christian era, his return was daily expected. He was emphatically thought to be "The Prophet," "the prophet like unto Moses, who should close the whole dispensation."

So long a trail of posthumous fame following on so long a life of misunderstanding and persecution, and perhaps even a death of martyrdom, makes Jeremiah stand forth from the whole ancient dispensation as the most signal instance of the

happy inconsistency with which churches and nations build the tombs of the prophets whom their fathers have stoned. So magnificent a future, following on a life and death of such continual suffering, introduces a new idea into the prophetic doctrine, which henceforth assumes proportions more and more definite. His contemporaries can have hardly failed to recognize the parallel which Saadia in the Jewish Church, and Grotius in the Christian Church, first drew out at length between the servant of God, "despised and rejected of men—a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and Jeremiah, led "as a lamb to the slaughter," laden with sorrows, betrayed by his friends, "ever making intercession for the transgressors," "stricken for the transgression of his people." As Jeremiah was "The Prophet" who, more than any other, seemed to live over again in the life of the Prophet of Nazareth, so the sorrows of Jeremiah, more than those of any other single prophet, correspond to the desertion, the isolation, the tenderness, the death, and the final glorification of the Divine Sufferer. His "Lamentations," by the sacredness of the grief which they depict, by the grandeur of the prophetic character which they represent, are not unworthy of the solemn and melancholy use to which they have been consecrated by the Latin Church in its celebration of the passion of Gethsemane and Calvary.

In a well-known picture our Lord is represented as the Good Shepherd taking a lost sheep out of the thorns; and Himself wearing a crown of thorns with a bleeding countenance. It is this throughout that speaks in the prophet Jeremiah. It is the bleeding Shepherd extricating His lost sheep from among the thorns of the world. The penitent of all ages and countries, in studying the Bible in order to know himself of God, naturally reads the prophet under this impression. The feeling with which a devout person looks on that touching representation of Christ, is like that which the reverential reader experiences when hearing in Jeremiah the voice of the Good Shepherd.

THE PROPHET OF SYMBOLS.

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES.

VIII.

EZEKIEL.

Contemporary with Jeremiah—Prophecies in Captivity—Applies the Imagery of the East—Priest as well as Prophet—Gigantic Emblems—His Prophecies of Jerusalem—Symbolic Acts—Dispensation of the Spirit—Individual Responsibility—The Gospel According to Ezekiel—Repent and be Saved—"Why will Ye Die?"—Vision of Dry Bones—Revival—The Mystic City and the Flowing Waters—Characteristics of Ezekiel—Lofty Grandeur of his Visions—Typical Acts and Attitudes—Boldness of His Spirit and Vehemence of Language—Rare Beauty—Practical Appeals—A Burning Portent in the Old Testament Sky—How does our Fancy Paint the Prophet?

THE great prophets came for the most part in succession; when one departed another arose, as watchmen in the dark days; they passed on the lamp one to another; for God left not His Church without witnesses. But now when His people were divided, some being still left in Jerusalem before its destruction, while others were carried captive to Babylon, the light becomes two-fold; Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesy together—the one in Jerusalem, the other by the river Chebar in the captivity of Babylon; for Ezekiel had been taken there among the captives eleven years before Jerusalem was destroyed. It is said that his prophecies were carried to Jerusalem, and those of Jeremiah brought to Babylon; and thus these two great prophets united their lights together. Though vast distances intervened, they mingled their tears.

How great a change must have come over the mind of an Israelite who had been carried away to Babylon, the great city of wonders, the seat of Oriental magnificence, of the wisdom of the ancients; where the Chaldeans watched the stars in the broad expanse of Eastern plains; the country whence

Egypt itself derived its language of mystery, making "living creatures" to represent the spiritual and Divine.

Like St. Paul at Rome, Ezekiel is a captive; but "the word of God is not bound." And now, to speak to captive Israel, the prophet takes up his parable from Babylon, and applies the new imagery and scenes of the East. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is henceforth known by a new name, as the "Lord of Hosts," the God of those armies of heaven whom the Babylonians ignorantly worshiped. The Spirit clothes itself with new language, and one meet for that language is chosen; the earthen vessel is moulded by the Divine hand for this use. As the Gospel comes to us in the garb of Greek and Roman simplicity, so the prophets of the captivity speak with the wonderful visions and symbols of the East, each with its appropriate adaptation of God.

Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel was a priest as well as a prophet, but with the priestly element more largely developed; and also one step further removed from the ancient prophets, inasmuch as he is the first in whom the author and the writer entirely preponderate over the seer, the poet, and the statesman. The scroll and the inkhorn, which we see only from time to time in Jeremiah, are never absent from Ezekiel. The speeches and odes of the earlier prophets have been preserved according to the original character of their utterance, in scattered fragments; Ezekiel's first constitute a book, arranged in regular chronological order from beginning to end. The atmosphere which he breathes, the vision by which he is called to his office, are alike strange to the older period; no longer Hebrew, but Asiatic; no longer the single, simple figure of cloud, or flame, or majestic human form, which had

WINGED SPHINX OF EGYPT.

been the means of conveying the truth of the Divine Presence to Moses or Isaiah, but a vast complexity, "wheel within wheel," as if corresponding to the new order of a larger, wider, deeper Providence now opening before him. The imagery that he sees, is that which no one could have used unless he had wandered through the vast halls of Assyrian palaces, and there gazed on all that Assyrian monuments have disclosed to us of human dignity and brute strength combined—the eagle-winged lion, the human-headed bull. These complicated forms supplied the vehicle of the sublime truths that dawned on him from amidst the mystic wheels, the sapphire throne, the amber fire, and the rainbow brightness; the four living creatures setting forth the incarnation of Christ; the face of a man; the lion speaking His kingdom and strength; the ox the sacrifice of His death; the eagle His resurrection and Godhead. In the visions of the prophet, we have the last glimpse of those gigantic emblems, which vanished during his life-time, only to reappear in our own age, from the ruins of the long-lost Nineveh.

Later traditions fondly identified him with his Mesopotamian home. In them he was represented as foretelling the flood of the river by which they were encamped; and as judging the tribes of Gad and Dan. He was buried in state near Babylon, in a sepulcher which has for centuries been visited by Jewish pilgrims, who believe that it was erected by Jehoiachin, and that the lamp which still burns upon it was lighted by Ezekiel himself. But according to the prophet's own record of his life, his heart was not in the land of his exile, but "in the land of his nativity." His own home, where he dwelt with his wife, and guided the counsels of the small community of the Chebar, faded from his eyes. Across the rich garden of that fertile region, across the vast Euphrates, across the intervening desert, his spirit still yearned toward Jerusalem, still lived in the Temple courts where once he had ministered. Though an exile, he was still one with his countrymen; and

in the sense of that union, and in the strength of a mightier power than his own, the bounds of space and time were over leaped, and during the seven years that elapsed before the city was overthrown, he lived absorbed in the prophetic sight of the things that were to be, and in the prophetic hearing of the words that were to be spoken, in this last crisis of his country's fate.

HIS PROPHECIES OF JERUSALEM.

In the presence of the impending catastrophe, he was amidst his fellow-exiles, exactly as Jeremiah amidst his fellow-

ASSYRIAN SPHINX.

citizens. An unshakable courage and confidence was needed to bear up against the words and looks of fury with which each was assailed. Each of the two prophets is the echo of the other's sorrow. Deep answers to deep across the Assyrian desert; the depth of woe in him who, from the walls of Zion, saw the storm approaching, is equaled if not surpassed, by the depth of woe in him who lived, as it were, in the skirts of the storm itself—"the whirlwind, the great cloud, the fire unfolding itself from the north"; gathering round the whole horizon before it reached the frontiers of Palestine. Not only in his words, but in his acts, he was to be a perpetual witness

of the coming desolation. Now he might be seen portraying on a tile all the details of the siege of the city; then again he would lie stretched out motionless, for more than a year, like one crushed to the ground under the burden of his people's sins. At other times he was to be seen, stamping with his feet and clasping his hands, in the agony of grief, or stirring a huge caldron, as if of the scum of his country's misery. Then again he would fix their attention by acts most abhorrent to his nature and his priestly calling. He cut off, lock by lock, the long tresses of his hair and beard, the peculiar marks of his sacerdotal office, and one by one threw them into the fire. He ate the filthy food which belonged only to the worst extremity of famine. And last of all, when the fatal day arrived, when the armies of Nebuchadnezzar had gathered round the walls of Jerusalem, the last and most awful sign was given to show how great and how irresistible was the calamity. On the evening of that day his wife died. The desire of his eyes was taken from him by a sudden stroke. And yet when the sun rose, and as the hours of the day passed on, he appeared in public with none of the frantic tokens of Oriental grief. He raised no piercing cry for the dead; he shed not a tear; the turban, which should have been dashed in anguish on the ground, was on his head; the feet that should have been bare were sandaled as usual. He did in all things as he would have done had no calamity overtaken him—himself the living sign and personification of a grief too deep for tears, too terrible for any funereal dirge either to arrest or to express. Well might the roll which was placed in his hand seem to be "written within and without with lamentations, and mourning, and woe."

But as in the case of Jeremiah, so in the case of Ezekiel, there was sweetness as of honey mingled with bitterness in his grief. What had appeared in germ in the writings of Jeremiah, was repeated in a fuller shape by Ezekiel. He is the disciple, such as has often been seen both in philosophy and theology,

carrying out into their most startling consequences the principles barely disclosed by the teacher. He as well as Jeremiah is a prophet especially of the second law—of the law written in the heart. He too reviews the history of the chosen people, and has the courage to treat them like any other people; to point out the natural and ethnological origin of the Holy City—Amorite and Hittite by birth—the failure even of the ancient rite of circumcision as a safeguard for the nations which had adopted it. He too is the witness of the dispensation of the Spirit; he sets forth, in language which belongs rather to the coming than the departing epoch, the magic transformation of himself, of his country, of its dead institutions, by the "Spirit" which breathes through all his visions; the breath of life which was in the utmost complexity of that Divine mechanism, in the utmost variety of those strange shapes, through which he was called to his mission. But the form in which this doctrine acquires in his hands the newest development is that of the responsibility of the individual soul separate from the collective nation, separate from the good or ill deserts of ancestry. The note which is struck for a moment by Jeremiah is taken up by Ezekiel with a force and energy which makes his announcement of it ring again and again from end to end of his writings. "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." Other prophets have more of poetical beauty, a deeper sense of Divine things, a tenderer feeling of the mercies of God for His people; none teach so simply, and with a simplicity the more remarkable from the elaborate imagery out of which it emerges, this great moral lesson, to us the first of all lessons. In the midst of this national revolution, when the day of

ASSYRIAN GRIFFIN.

mercy is past, and when no image is too loathsome to describe the iniquities of Israel, the prophet is not tempted to demand the destruction of the righteous with the wicked, nor the salvation of the wicked for the sake of the righteous. He contemplates the extremest case of the venerable patriarchs of former ages, or perhaps of his own,—Noah, Daniel, and Job—and yet feels that even they could save neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness. He blames equally those false teachers who make the heart of the wicked glad, whom the Lord hath not made glad, and those who make the heart of the righteous sad, whom the Lord hath not made sad. The old Mosaic precept of the visitation of the sins of the fathers upon the children, had become popularized into the proverb afloat both in Jerusalem and in Chaldea, that "the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." But in spite of its own authority and its acceptance by his countrymen, and although containing a partial truth, it is put to flight before Ezekiel's announcement of the still loftier principle, "all souls are God's; as the soul of the father, so is the soul of the son. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. He that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity . . . . he is just; he shall surely live."

In words like these, both before and after the fall of his country, the mighty soul of the priestly prophet poured itself out. How startling a doctrine to his own generation is evident from the iron firmness which was needed to proclaim it; a forehead of adamant, harder than flint, a heart never dismayed. How startling to the Jewish Church of after times we learn from the narrow escape which this wonderful book sustained, on this very account, of exclusion from the sacred canon altogether. The masters of the synagogue hesitated long before they could receive into the sacred writings a prophet who seemed boldly to contradict the very Pentateuch itself; and even when they received it, attempted, it is

said, to rewrite his burning words, in order to bring them intc accordance with the popular theology of their day. It is hardly possible to overrate the vast importance of this, the last expiring cry of the Jewish monarchy, which both from its indispensable connection with the very foundation of Christian doctrine, and from the supernatural energy of its inspiration, may be truly called the Gospel according to Eze-

GRECIAN GRIFFIN.

kiel. Nor is its universal significance impaired, because it is we may say, wrung out of him by the cruel necessities of the age, at once their consolation and their justification. In ordinary times, the mutual dependence of man on man, the control of circumstances, the hereditary contagion of sin and misery, fall in with the older view which Ezekiel combats. But it is the special use of such critical calamities as that of the fall of Jerusalem, that they reveal to us in a higher and still more important sense the absolute independence of man from man; the truth that we are not merely parts of a long chain of circumstances which cannot be broken, but that we must each one live for himself and die for himself. Ezekiel set

forth in his own person the inalienable freedom of each individual conscience and will, and he taught with the clearness of the New Testament the doctrine that whoever truly repents of sin will be accepted of God. However unfavorable our position to the practice of virtue, whatever depraved dispositions we inherit, and even physical tendencies to sin, whatever surroundings of crime and calamity our ancestors have bequeathed to us, whatever our own transgressions, there is still hope for us if we will repent. It is still possible by God's grace to turn and live. God knows our whole case, with its palliations and its aggravations. He will deal justly with us. And if we repent, He will have mercy on us. And He will give us grace to enable us to repent. And the extent of our need will be the measure of His grace. No difficulties need discourage us, no hard thoughts of God's government fill us with dismay. He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that he turn from his way and live. "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?"

So clearly does Ezekiel preach the Gospel, so strongly does he state the doctrine of man's responsibility, and God's justice and mercy and grace.

VISION OF DRY BONES.

We come now to a remarkable incident in the life of the prophet. The hand of the Lord was upon him, and set him down in the midst of the wide open plain of Mesopotamia In that desert tract was the sight so familiar to passers through the wilderness—bones and skeletons of man and beast, dry and bleaching on the yellow sands, the remnants of some vast caravan leaving behind it its fifties and its hundreds to perish of hunger or weariness; or the burial-place of some wild tribe or some mighty host of ancient days, whose remains, long covered by the dust, some passing whirlwind had revealed to view. Round these dry and lifeless relics, the

prophet was in his vision bid to walk to and fro, and to utter the loud chant of his prophetic utterances. He prophesied, and as his voice sounded through the stillness of the desert air, there was an answering peal as of thunder, and the hard earth shook under his feet, and the bones came together, and the sinews and the flesh once more crept over them, and they lay, still dead and lifeless, but like the corpses of a vast multitude from whom breath has just departed. Again he raised his wild chant, and the wind on which he himself had been borne was swelled as by a rushing blast from the four corners of the wilderness, and the corpses lived and stood on their feet, and the lonely desert was peopled with an exceeding great army. Even without the Divine interpretation which followed, the meaning of the vision was clear. Those bones in the desert were, indeed, an apt emblem of the race of Israel, scattered, divided each from each, their "bones dried," "their hope lost." That revival—the pledge and likeness of all revivals for all future ages, was a fit likeness of that to which they were now to look forward, when the grave of their captivity would be opened, when the skeleton of Judaism would come out from its tomb, and be inspired with the invigorating blast of the Divine Spirit, and be clothed with fresh and living beauty.

FISH GOD OF ASSYRIA.

Yet more encouraging is the closing vision of the prophet's life. Again, as in his earlier days, but now with a wholly

different purpose, the same Divine hand seizes him, and transports him to his native country. In the visions of God he stands on the summit of a high mountain, and there is revealed to him the mysterious plan of a city and temple, exactly corresponding to that which he had known in his youth, even down to minute details, but on a gigantic scale. And from under the Temple porch he sees the perennial spring which lay hid within the rocky vault burst forth into a full and overflowing stream, which pours down the terraces toward the eastern gate. The dry bed of the Kedron is filled with a mighty torrent, which rises higher and higher till it becomes a vast river, and the rugged and sterile rocks which line its course break out into verdure, and through the two deep defiles the stream divides and forces its way into the desert plain of the Jordan, and into the lifeless waters of the Salt Sea, and the Sea of Death begins to teem with living creatures and with innumerable fish, like the Sea of Tiberias or the Mediterranean, and the fishermen stand all along its banks to watch the transformation, and according to the sight so common in Eastern countries, the life-giving water is everywhere followed by the growth of luxuriant vegetation—"trees for food, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed."

WINGED DEITY OF ASSYRIA.

We may notice, in closing, some of the peculiar characteristics of Ezekiel. Mark, first, the lofty and visionary groundwork of his prophecy. It is the record of a succession of trances. The prophet usually hangs high between earth and the regions of the ethereal. A scenery gigantic as that of dreams, select as that of pictures, rich as that of fancy, and distinct as that of nature, surrounds his motions, and swims before his eye. The shapes which he had seen in the Temple, or with

which his imagination had become familiar in Chaldea, come back upon his vision while in the prophetic state, but come back altered in form, enlarged in size, and shining in the radiance of the Divine glory. How terrific the composite of the four living creatures, with their four faces and wings, seen amid a confusion of light and darkness, of still fire and leaping lightnings, of burnished brass and burning coals, coupled with the high rings of the eyed wheels, unified by the Spirit moving in them all, overhung by the terrible crystal of the firmament, and that again by the similitude of a man seated upon it—surrounded as they pursue their straight, stern path, by the girdle of a rainbow, which softens the fiery storm, and moving to the music of a multitude of waters, "as the noise of an host," which is commanded from above by a mightier, solitary voice—the voice of the Eternal! What pencil shall represent to us the glory of this apparition? Or who, but one whose brow had been made adamant, and whose eye had been cleansed with lightning, could have faced it as it passed? Or shall we look at the prophet again, seized by the form of a man's hand, lifted up by a lock of his hair between earth and heaven, and brought from Chebar to Jerusalem? Or shall we follow him, as he passes down the deepening abominations of his country? Or shall we descend after him into the nameless valley of vision? Or shall we take our stand beside him on that high hill, higher far than that of Mirza's vision, or than any peak in the Delectable Mountains, and see the great city on the south, or hear the rush of the holy waters encompassing the earth? Visions these, which human language is too poor to describe. From heaven, in some clear future day, might be expected to fall down at once

WINGED DEITY OF ASSYRIA.

the epithets which can express their glory, and the light which can explain their meaning.

Mark, next, besides his visions, a singular abundance and variety of typical acts and attitudes. Now he eats a roll of a deadly sweetness. Now he enacts a mimic siege against a tile, representing Jerusalem. Now he shaves his beard and hair, and burns a third part in the fire, smites a third part with a knife, scatters a third part to the winds, reserving only a few hairs as a remnant. Now he makes and shows a chain, as the worthy recompense of an evil and insane generation. Now he prepares stuff for removing, and brings it out day after day in the sight of all. Now he stands with bread and water in his hands, but with bread, water, hands, body and head trembling, as if in some unheard storm, as a sign of coming tremors and tempests among his people. And now, sad necessity, the desire of his eyes, his wife is taken away by a stroke; yet God's seal is set upon his lips, forbidding him to mourn. It was the sole link binding him to earth, and once broken, he becomes loosened, and free as a column of smoke separated from the sacrifice, and gilded into flame by the setting sun.

Such types suited the ardent temperament of the East. They were its best oratorical gestures. They expressed what the waving of hands, the bending of knees, the beating of breasts could not fully do. They were solidified figures. Modern ages can show nothing equal or similar, and the roll, the tile, the hair, the chain, the quaking bread and water of Ezekiel, must be preserved as specimens of an extinct tongue, the strangest and the strongest ever spoken on earth.

Mark, next, a peculiar boldness of spirit and vehemence of language. How can he fear man, who had trembled not in the presence of visions, the report of which on his page is yet able to bristle the hair and chill the blood? Thrown into heaven's heat, as into a furnace, he comes forth indurated to suffering and to shame, his face a flint, his brow adamant, his

eye a coal of supernatural fire. Ever afterward, his style seems hurrying in chase of the "wheels," and his colors of speech are changing and gorgeous as the light which surrounded them. A certain rough power, too, distinguishes many of his chapters. He is "naked and is not ashamed." As he felt bound to give a severe and literal transcript of the "things of heaven" which he saw, he conceives himself bound also literally to transcribe the things of earth and hell. Notwithstanding this impetuosity, there comes sometimes across his jet-black lyre, with its fiery strings, a soft, beautiful music, which sounds more sweetly and strangely from the medium it has found. It is not pathos, but elegant beauty, reposing amid rude strength, like a finished statue found in an aboriginal cave. There is, for instance, a picture in the sixteenth chapter, which high literary authority pronounces "the most delicately beautiful in the written language of men." "Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badger's skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and ear-rings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver, and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God." This seems a fragment of Solomon's Song; it is a jewel dropped from the forehead of his "spouse," and acts as a *foil* to the fearful minuteness of description which characterizes the rest of the chapter. In this point of his genius, Ezekiel resembles Dante. Like Dante, he

loves the terrible; but, like Dante, too, the beautiful seems to love him.

Sprinkled, besides, amid the frequent grandeurs and rare beauties of his book, are practical appeals, of close and cogent force. Such, for instance, are his picture of a watchman's duty, his parable of sour grapes, his addresses at various times to the shepherds, to the elders and to the people of Israel. From dim, imaginative heights, he comes down, like Moses

WEEPING WILLOW OF BABYLON.

from the darkness of Sinai, with face shining and foot stamping out indignation against a guilty people, who thought him lost upon his aerial altitudes. He is at once the most poetical and practical of preachers. This paradox has not unfrequently been exemplified in the history of preaching, as the names of Chrysostom, Taylor, Howe, Hall and Chalmers, can testify.

He who is able to fly upward, is able to return, and with tenfold impetus, from his flight. The poet, too, has an intuitive knowledge of the springs of human nature which no study and no experience can fully supply, and which enables him, when he turns from his visions to the task, to "pierce to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow," and to become a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The comparison of a comet, often used, and generally wasted, is strikingly applicable to Ezekiel. Sharp, distinct, yet nebulous, swift, sword-shaped, blood-red, he hangs in the Old Testament sky, rather burning as a portent, than shining as a prophet. It is not his magnitude, or solidity, so much as his intensity and his strangeness, which astonish you. It is not the amount of light he gives which you value so much, as the heat, the excitement, and the curiosity which he produces. "From what depths, mysterious stranger, hast thou come? what are the tidings of thy shadowed, yet fiery beams? and whither art thou bound?" are inevitable questions to ask, although the answers have not fully arrived. He is a treasury of gold and gems, but triple-barred, and guarded by watching seraphim.

Such a being was Ezekiel,—among men, but not of them, detained in the company of flesh, his feet on earth, his soul floating amid the cherubim. We know little of his history; it is marked chiefly by the procession of his predictions, as during twenty-one years they marched onward to the mountain-top, where they were abruptly closed. But we cannot successfully check our fancy, as she seeks to represent to us the face and figure of the prophet. We see him young, slender, long-locked, stooping as if under the burden of the Lord, with a visible fire in his eye and cheek, and an invisible fire about his motions and gestures—an earnest purpose pursuing him like a ghost, a wild beauty hanging around him like the blossom on the thorn-tree, and the air of early death adding

a supernatural age and dignity to his youthful aspect. We see him, as he moved through the land, a sun-gilded storm, followed by looks of admiration, wonder and fear; and at last we behold him on the Mount of Vision, the Pisgah of prophecy, with rapturous wonder saluting the spectacle of the mystic city and the holy waters, till the burning soul exhales through the burning eyes, and the wearied body falls down in his own solitary chamber, and what seemed to be actual vision proves to be a dream, but a dream as true as are the future reign of Jesus, and the future glory of the City and Church of God.

Thus the prophecies of Ezekiel, like the miracles and parables of our Lord, speak to the eye as well as the ear, and thus more powerfully reach and affect the mind. Like the Revelation of John, they are to be approached with caution when we would seek to interpret them. One of the Christian Fathers, Jerome, says that he was accustomed when young to go on the Lord's day into the caves at Rome where the apostles and martyrs were buried, and there in silence and darkness amid the chambers of the dead to meditate on the visions of Ezekiel, and that thus he learned to approach them with awe and reverence, and so in some measure to understand them, seeing light, he says, in obscurity, and exclaiming, "I have found Him whom my soul loveth, I will hold Him fast and will not let Him go." Thus "in the cloudy and dark day" of affliction, we may understand the prophet better, and get nearer to the Saviour whom he foretold. And if there be much that is mysterious, there is much also that we can spiritualize, and use to examine and correct our own hearts, and build up our souls in righteousness. The temple of God of which the prophet speaks is in one sense our own soul. Happy he who mourns for all pollutions and abominations that have been there, who puts out from thence all idols, and makes it fit for the indwelling of God. Dear reader, above all

knowledge, all fame, all worldly success, in importance, is the purifying of your own heart!

> "All arts and knowledges beside
> Will do you little good."

Overtopping all is the divine art, the gracious accomplishment, of keeping yourself unspotted from the world. Blessed is he who keeps his heart tender and low to understand the prophets of God, whether speaking in the plaintive voice of Jeremiah amid the ruins of Jerusalem, or the wild harp of Ezekiel by the waters of Babylon. Let it not be said of us that the prophet is to us "as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument," for we hear his words, but do them not.

THE PROPHET OF DREAMS.

DANIEL.

IX.

DANIEL.

Babylon—Temple of Belus—Hanging Gardens—Daniel Brought to Babylon—The Magi—The Hebrew Youth refuse the Royal Dainties—Their Wisdom—Nebuchadnezzar's Dream—Daniel Recalls and Interprets it—Is Exalted to a High Office—Announces God's Judgment to the King—Nebuchadnezzar Driven out to Dwell in the Fields—Cyrus—Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin—The Euphrates Drained and Babylon Taken—Daniel made Prime Minister—Accused to Darius—Cast into the Lions' Den—The Restoration of the Jews—Daniel's Visions—What are Dreams?—Messiah Foretold—No Account of Daniel's Death—The Prophets Vanish from Sight but Their Messages Remain.

In the kingdom of Judah, as in that of the ten tribes, the captives were carried off in three detachments. In the first of these was Daniel. By order of the king he was placed in the royal palace at Babylon to be trained for the service of the great conqueror.

Under the vigorous rule of Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldean empire had rapidly increased, and Babylon had assumed an aspect of the greatest magnificence. This wonderful city is believed to have occupied the site of the ancient Babel. It was situated in a flat, fertile plain, on the banks of the Euphrates, and formed an exact square, each of the sides being fifteen miles in length. Its walls were eighty-seven feet in thickness, so that several chariots could run abreast along their summit, and they were reared to the height of three hundred and fifty feet. The vast ditch which encompassed the walls had furnished the materials for the large bricks of which it was composed, and which also formed the lining of the ditch. The layers of the brick were cemented with bitumen, abundantly supplied by the pits in the neighborhood

Twenty-five gates of brass on each of the four sides, formed the approaches to a corresponding number of streets intersecting one another at right angles, each street being fifteen miles in length and a hundred and fifty feet in width. To complete the internal arrangements, four other streets, with houses only on one side, the ramparts being on the other, were added. By this precise regularity of arrangement, Babylon was divided into six hundred and seventy-six squares, each square being two miles and a quarter in circuit. The houses were very lofty, being carried to the height of three or four stories; but the width of the streets, and the open courts and gardens within hollow squares, must have produced a perfect ventilation and a healthy openness that form a strange contrast to the cramped, irregular and unhealthy streets in some of the most refined and civilized of modern cities. It is probable that the streets nearest the walls were devoted to mercantile affairs and to the preservation of stores, while those nearer the center formed the residences of the higher classes The Euphrates intersected the city from north to south, and over it was erected a magnificent bridge, about a furlong in length, and sixty feet in width. At its extremities were two palaces—the old palace on the eastern side of the river, the new one on the western.

BABYLONIAN COFFIN.

Near the old palace stood the temple of Belus. Of this Herodotus, the father of history, says:

"In the middle of the city is the temple of the god Belus, with brazen gates, remaining up to my own time, quadrangular, and occupying a space of two furlongs. In the middle of the sacred precinct stands a solid tower, a furlong both in depth and width; upon this tower another is erected, and another upon this, to the number of eight towers. An ascent to them has been formed on the outside, in a spiral staircase running round all the towers. As one reaches about half way, resting-places and seats are provided. In the last tower is a large shrine, and within the temple lies a large bed well appointed, and near it stands a golden table"; and the priests "assert what I can by no means believe, namely, that the god himself frequents the temple, and reposes on the couch. And there is another shrine lower down, where there stands a large golden image of the god, and near it is placed a large golden table, and the pedestal and the throne are of gold; and as the Chaldeans assert, these things were made for eight hundred talents of gold, and a thousand talents worth of frankincense are offered every year when they celebrate the festival of the god."

The whole of the temple was enriched with the offerings of private devotees, consisting of massive golden censers, statues, cups and sacred vessels, of a weight and value scarcely to be imagined.

Nebuchadnezzar bestowed immense pains on the embellishment of Babylon, and, among other great works, constructed its famous hanging gardens, and presented them to his wife, Amytis, who, being a native of Media, which was a hilly country, was anxious to see something in Babylon resembling the mountains of her native land These gardens contained a square, of more than four hundred feet on each side, and were carried up, in the manner of several large terraces, one above the other, till the height equaled that of the walls of

the city. The ascent from terrace to terrace was by stairs ten feet wide. The whole pile was sustained by vast arches, raised on other arches, one above another, and strengthened by a wall surrounding it on every side, twenty feet in thickness. On the top of the arches were first laid large flat stones. Over these was a quantity of weeds, mixed with bitumen, on which were rows of bricks closely cemented together. The whole was covered with thick sheets of lead, on which lay the soil of the garden. The earth was so deep that large trees could take root and grow in it. The trees which the king planted were of various kinds, generally such as were not native in Babylon, but which grew in Media. At a distance this whole artificial mound appeared like an immense hill covered with forest trees. From its summit a fine view was afforded of the city and the country around for many miles. The different terraces contained fountains, seats and banqueting-rooms; and the whole extent was adorned with flowers and foliage.

To this wonderful city, in the third year of Jehoiakim, eighteen or nineteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem, were brought Daniel and his companions, to be instructed in the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. The Magi, or learned men, of Babylon were a numerous and important class. The movements of the heavenly bodies, the qualities of metals and minerals, prognostications of the future, explanations of dreams, and similar subjects, constituted their studies, and as they claimed great skill in foretelling the future, they acquired a position of extraordinary influence.

Flung in among these cunning priests, Daniel and his companions were exposed to the greatest danger. They were mercifully enabled from the very first to make a decided and prudent stand against Babylonian luxury, and afterward a still more noble stand against Babylonian idolatry. Their spirit was a great contrast to that yielding, accommodating temper in religious matters, which had been a prominent

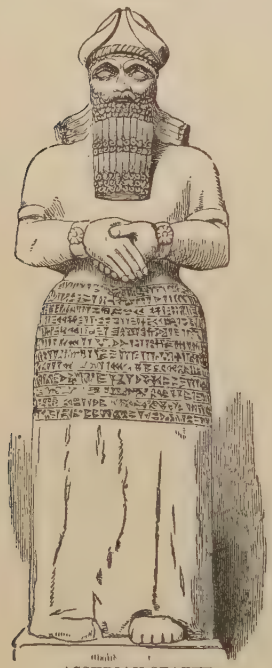
weakness of a large proportion of the Jews. Their names formed worthy additions to the illustrious roll of faithful men, headed by Abraham, who braved all terrors rather than prove unfaithful to their God, and who form the brightest and noblest galaxy that ever threw luster on any nation.

Being furnished, as was customary, with rich viands from the royal table, of which they could not partake without violating the ceremonial law which God had imposed upon His people, Daniel obtained permission for himself and his companions to use coarser fare, and thenceforth voluntarily submitted to a course of life rigidly abstemious, that he might not disobey the commands of heaven. In this the blessing of God was upon him, and when his physical and mental training was complete, and he, with his three friends, was brought into the presence of the king, the monarch was exceedingly pleased not only with their personal appearance, but with their rare learning and wisdom, for he found that they knew "ten times" more than all the magicians and astrologers in his whole realm.

Nebuchadnezzar having been visited with one of those visions of the night by means of which the omniscient God, in times previous to the Gospel revelation, was wont to evince His providence and supreme administration, sought relief from the agitation into which the prophetic dream had plunged his proud spirit, by demanding with threats, from his wise men, not only an interpretation of the dream, but a relation of its circumstances, which, in the disturbed state of his mind, had escaped from his memory. In the denunciations of death which the infuriated monarch issued against those from whom he hoped to extort this superhuman information, Daniel with his companions was involved; and having obtained by his prayers a revelation of the mysterious vision, from Him who alone could give it, he was enabled to recall the particulars of it to Nebuchadnezzar's recollection, and to furnish an interpretation of the dream, accompanying

his disclosures with a faithful exhortation to the monarch to acknowledge the supremacy of that God to whose inspiration alone the prophet ascribed his knowledge of the mystery.

It seems that the king had beheld in his sleep a great image, composed of different metals. And suddenly a stone broke the image into shivers, and then swelled out into the size of a vast mountain. Daniel told him that this image was meant to represent the kingdom over which he was then ruling; that this kingdom would by degrees give way, and at length come to an end; and that the little stone represented God's kingdom, which was in the end to subdue all the others.



ASSYRIAN STATUE OF NEBO.

Nebuchadnezzar felt persuaded that Daniel's explanation was the right one; and consequently he made him at once a great man, loaded him with gifts, and gave him a high office in his kingdom. Thus the captive youth became one of the chief rulers in Babylon.

On a subsequent occasion, Daniel was called upon to declare to the same sovereign the decree of the Most High which had gone forth against him, that, for his arrogant usurpation of the Divine prerogative, and refusal to acknowledge the one living and true God, he should for a time be deprived of reason, and degraded from the height of his grandeur to the level of the brute creation. In this trying juncture he hesitated not to hazard his honors and his life, by faithfully disclosing the counsels of heaven, and recommending to the proud monarch humiliation and repentance. "Thou shalt be driven from the society of men, and thy dwelling

shall be with the beasts of the field, till seven times shall pass over thee, and thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth them to whom He will. Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."

The king does not seem to have heeded this call to repentance, for at the end of a year we find him haughtily pacing his palace, boasting of his greatness and power: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" While the word was in his mouth, a voice fell from heaven, saying, The kingdom is departed from thee, and they shall drive thee from men, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen. And the same hour the thing was fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar, and his body was wet with the dews of heaven, till his hairs were grown as eagle's feathers, and his nails like bird's claws. His acknowledgment of the Most High, after his recovery, is cordial, and seems to indicate a chastened heart. The events of his reign must have had a great effect in exalting the true God in the estimation of Eastern nations, and perhaps drawing attention to the sacred books of the Jews.

About this time there comes on the field of history a prince of singular character and great ability—Cyrus, founder of the Medo-Persian empire, who had been designated long before by the Prophet Isaiah, as the appointed deliverer of the Jews. For a long time, Babylon maintained its independence against him. Surrounded by walls of such enormous height and strength, and having provisions for twenty years, even Cyrus would have had to leave it in despair, but for a stratagem. A great festival was going on within the city, during which Belshazzar, the king, was guilty of a horrid act of profanity, using the sacred vessels of Jerusalem for convivial purposes,

and extolling meanwhile the gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, wood and stone, which he and his people worshiped. A mysterious hand was seen on the palace wall, tracing letters which none of the Babylonian wise men could read, till the queen-mother, Nitocris, bethinking her of Daniel, caused him to be sent for. He at once deciphered the letters, and boldly announced as their import, that the kingdom was taken from Belshazzar and given to the Medes and Persians. Meanwhile Cyrus, by drawing off the waters of the Euphrates, obtained an entrance for his soldiers, who, advancing to the palace, killed Belshazzar, and were soon in undisputed possession of the city. Like the Troy of the poets, it was taken when drunkenness and riot had plunged its chieftains into that sleep from which they awoke only to the bitterness of death. Nature turned from her course, and the river which had watered the gardens of glory, retired from its proper limits, and opened a dry pathway for the destroyer.

The change of dynasty produced no alteration in Daniel's condition. The estimation in which he was held, and the confidence reposed in him by the new administration, appear to have been unlimited. "It pleased Darius to set over the empire a hundred and twenty princes, and over these three presidents, of whom Daniel was the first." Darius was the king of the Medes, the uncle, and afterward the father-in-law of Cyrus. When Cyrus was absent on a warlike expedition, Daniel's enemies accused him to Darius. His exalted position drew upon him the envy of many. A general conspiracy was formed against him. There was a natural jealousy of him as a foreigner. His enemies watched him narrowly, and tried hard to find some flaw in his conduct. But he used his authority wisely, desiring in his exalted station to do all to the glory of God. And his eminent talents and endowments, coupled with his unimpeachable probity, rendered the success of any charges to be brought against him for incapacity or malversation in office altogether hopeless; "forasmuch as

he was faithful, neither was any error or fault to be found in him." "Therefore," said this band of conspirators, "we shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except on the score of the law of his God." Daniel's devotion was well known. At each of the three hours of prayer prescribed by the institutions of his country, he was wont to offer up supplication with his face directed toward the holy Temple of Jerusalem, as suggested in the solemn prayer of Solomon at the dedication of that sacred edifice. These wicked men persuaded Darius to make a decree that no prayer should be offered to any one but the king for a certain number of days. This proposition was not more shockingly impious than many other gross flatteries offered in heathen times to princes of countries more enlightened than Assyria, and it might appear to Darius to be aimed against the Babylonian idolatries, which the Medes and Persians viewed with contempt and detestation. Daniel knew well enough that this insidious decree would bring him into trouble. But his duty was clear. The laws of his religion he would still obey. Three times in the day he knelt at his devotions, with his face turned toward his beloved Jerusalem, putting up earnest supplications to Him whom he knew to be his heavenly Father and Friend.

This was what his enemies wanted. Here was a charge to bring against him. He had dared to act contrary to the king's decree. Darius received the accusation very unwillingly, and would gladly have spared his valued servant; but the rigid character of the laws of the Medes and Persians forbade the interposition of the monarch in behalf of the accused. He sought, indeed, to evade the consequences of his rash decree, and "labored till the going down of the sun to deliver Daniel," but without effect.

The punishment which had been named was, that the offender should be cast into a den of fierce lions. And consequently, Daniel is seized and thrust into the den. And there he is condemned to pass the night—a poor, defenseless man

in the midst of animals which thirsted for his blood. But there was One there to protect him, an unseen One who was able to shut the lions' mouths, and keep His servant as safely as if he had been in his own chamber. "So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God."

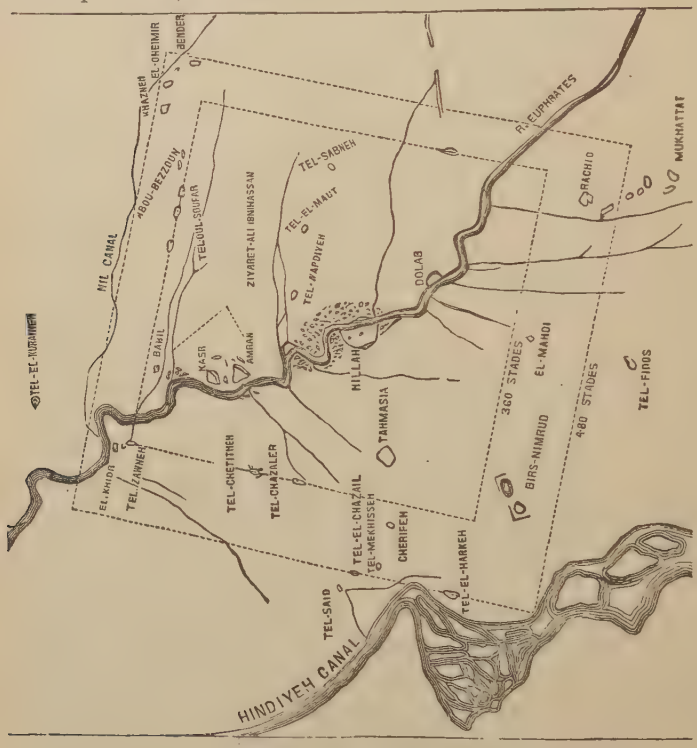


CHART OF THE COUNTRY ROUND BABYLON.

What a night must that have been, which Daniel passed in the den! Was he alone? No; for God was with him. Did he fear? No, his mind was calm and prayerful. He believed in God, and all was well. He passed a far happier night amidst the lions than did Darius in the palace. When the king, after a sleepless night, found him safe, he ordered him

to be brought forth at once, and his enemies to be put in his place.

Upon the death of Darius, Cyrus became the sole ruler of the magnificent Medo-Persian empire. It is hardly a stretch of fancy to imagine an interview between him and the venerable Hebrew prophet, who had risen so high in the councils of the Babylonian kings. We may easily suppose Daniel, taking from his girdle a parchment-roll two hundred years old, the book of the Prophet Isaiah, and reading to the king the first few verses of the forty-fifth chapter. Great must have been the astonishment of Cyrus to find himself mentioned by name in that old Hebrew document; described as breaking in pieces "the brazen gates" of Babylon; as receiving from God "the hidden riches" of Crœsus and other wealthy kings; and as God's appointed instrument for setting His people free. Great, too, must have been the impression made on him by the magnificent description of the majestic power of the great God whom Cyrus and the Persians believed to be little more than co-ordinate with the principle of evil, "I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." Yielding to the impression of such truths, Cyrus, among his very first acts, issued a decree, permitting the Jews to return and build the Temple of the Lord at Jerusalem. This permission was given with the utmost cordiality. No Hebrew disposed to take part in the work could now be detained against his will in Babylon or the neighborhood; and though in point of fact many did not return now, and many never returned at all yet as a state of compulsory bondage the Babylonian captivity was at an end.

Daniel did not accompany the emigrants, but remained at his post in Persia. It was partly before and partly after this period that he had those remarkable visions which form so large a part of the book that is called by his name. And these, taken with the dreams of others which he interpreted, entitle

him "Prophet of Dreams," monarch of the dim dynasty of night. "Sleep on," said an unhappy literary man, over the dust of Bunyan, in Bunhillfields, "thou prince of dreamers." But in this realm, Joseph was the first and Daniel the second monarch.

"A dream is from God," is one of the earliest, shortest and truest of sentences. Strange, stuttering, imperfect, but real and direct messengers from the Infinite, are our dreams. Like worn-out couriers, dying with their news at the threshold of the door, dreams seem sometimes unable to utter their tidings. Or is it that we do not yet understand their language, and must lay aside missives which contain our duty and our destiny?

In dreams space is annihilated, the dead live, we commune with the absent, recall the past though perished, see the present though distant, and descry many a clear spot through the mist of the future. The dreaming world, as the region where all elements are mingled, all contradictions reconciled, all tenses lost in one—supplies us with the only faint conception we have of that awful NOW, in which the Eternal dwells. In every dream, does not the soul, like a stream, sink transiently into the deep abyss, whence it came, and where it is to merge at death, and are not the confusion and incoherence of dreams just the hubbub, the foam and the struggle, with which the river weds the ocean?

But all dreams which ever waved rapture over the brow of youthful genius, or distilled poison on the drugged and desperate repose of unhappy bard or philosopher, must yield in magnitude, grandeur and comprehensiveness, to the dreams which Daniel expounded or saw. They are all colossal in size, as befitted dreams dreamed in the palaces of Babylon. No ears of corn, blasted or flourishing—no kine, fat or lean —appear to Daniel; but *here* stands up a great image, with head of gold, breast of silver, belly of brass, and feet of iron

mingled with clay; and *there* waves a tree, tall as heaven, and broad as earth. *Here* again, as the four winds are striving upon the ocean, four monstrous forms emerge, and *there* appears the throne of the Ancient of Days, with all its appurtenances of majesty and insignia of justice. Empires, religions, the history of time, the opening gateways of eternity, are all spanned by these dreams. No wonder that monarchs sprang up trembling and troubled from their sight, and that one of them changed the countenance of the prophet, as years of anguish could not have done.

They are recounted in language grave, solemn, serene. The poetry of Daniel lies rather in the objects presented than in the figures or the language of the description. The vehemence, pathos, or fury, which, in various measures, characterized his brethren, are not found in him. A calm, uniform dignity distinguishes all his actions and words. It forsakes not his brow even while he is astonished for one hour in the presence of the monarch. It enters with him as he enters, awful in holiness, into the hall of Belshazzar's feast. It sits over him in the lions' den, like a canopy of state; and it sustains his style to its usual, even, exalted pitch in describing the session of the Ancient of Days, and the fiery stream which goes forth before Him.

The great grandeur of Daniel's prophecy arises from its frequent glimpses of the coming One. Over all the wondrous emblems and colossal confusions of his visions, there is seen slowly yet triumphantly rising, one head and form, the form of a man, the head of a prince. It is the Messiah painting Himself upon the sky of the future. The vision at once interpenetrates and overtops all the rest. Gathering from former prophets the separate rays of His glory which they saw, Daniel forms them into one kingly shape; to Him assigns the task of defending the holy people, at His feet lays the keys of universal empire, and leaves Him judging the quick and the dead. To Daniel it was permitted to give full

birth to that great thought which has ever since been the life of the Church and the hope of the world.

And now this dignified counselor, this fearless saint, this ardent patriot, this blameless man, this magnificent dreamer, must pass away from our page. Very different was he from the cluster of prophets among whom he is found. They, for the most part, were poor, solitary, and wandering men, despised and rejected; he was the favorite of monarchs. Their predictions exposed them to danger and shame; his dreams drew him aloft to riches and honor. As prophets, they were admitted now and then among princes; but he became a prince through his power of prophecy. Yet we feel justified in putting the well-conditioned and gold-hung Daniel beside the gaunt, hungry, and wild-eyed sons of the prophets we have just been picturing. Prophetic souls are kindred, whether they look out from beneath the brows of kings or beggars.

Certainly Daniel was one of the most admirable of Scripture worthies. His character was formed in youth; it was retained in defiance of the seductions and the terrors of a court. His genius, furnished with every advantage of education, and every variety of Pagan learning, was consecrated to God; the window of his prophecy, like that of his chamber, stood open toward Jerusalem. Over his death hangs a cloud of darkness. The deaths of patriarchs and kings are recorded, but those who left us prophetic writings drop suddenly from their airy summits, and we see and hear of them no more. Was Isaiah sawn asunder? Did Jeremiah perish a martyr in Egypt? Did Ezekiel die in youth, crucified on the fiery cross of his own temperament? We cannot certainly tell. And how came Daniel, the prince of dreamers, to his end? Did he, old and full of honors, die amid some happy Sabbath dream? Or did he depart, turning his eyes through his open window toward that beloved city where the hammers of reconstruction were already resounding? We cannot

tell. No matter; the messages are with us, while the men are away; the messages are certain, while the fate of the men is wrapt in doubt. This is in fine keeping with the severe reserve of Scripture, and with the character of its writers. Munificent and modest benefactors of mankind, they knocked at the door of the human family at night, threw in inestimable wealth, fled, and the sound of their feet, dying away in the distance, is all the tidings they have given of themselves.

THE VISION OF BELSHAZZAR.

"The king was on his throne,
The satraps throng'd the hall;
A thousand bright lamps shone
O'er that high festival.
A thousand cups of gold,
In Judah deem'd divine—
Jehovah's vessels hold
The godless heathen's wine!

"In that same hour and hall,
The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
And wrote as if on sand:
The fingers of a man;—
A solitary hand
Along the letters ran
And traced them like a wand.

"The monarch saw, and shook,
And bade no more rejoice;
All bloodless wax'd his look,
And tremulous his voice:
Let the men of lore appear,
The wisest of the earth,
And expound the words of fear
Which mar our royal mirth.'

"Chaldea's seers are good,
But here they have no skill;
And the unknown letters stood
Untold and awful still.
And Babel's men of age
Are wise and deep in lore,
But now they were not sage:
They saw, but knew no more.

"A captive in the land,
A stranger and a youth,
He heard the king's command,
He saw that writing's truth.
The lamps around were bright,
The prophecy in view;
He read it on that night,
The morrow proved it true.

"Belshazzar's grave is made,
His kingdom pass'd away,
He, in the balance weigh'd,
Is light and worthless clay,
The shroud his robe of state,
His canopy the stone;
The Mede is at his gate,
The Persian on his throne!"

HEBREW MELODIES

THE PROPHET OF THE GENTILES.

JONAH CAST FORTH BY THE FISH

X.

JONAH.

The Minor Prophets—Jonah the Son of the Widow of Zarephath—Nineveh—Its vast Remains—Signs of Cruelty—Jonah the First Missionary to the Heathen—The Flight of the Prophet—Asleep in the Vessel—The Storm at Sea—Jonah is Aroused and Confesses his Guilt—Is Cast into the Sea—A Great Fish Receives Him—His Meditations in the Depths—Thrown out on the Shore—Enters Nineveh—His Piercing Cry—The Doomed City Repents and is Spared—The Prophet is Angry—The Withered Gourd—Lessons of the Book—God not Bound to Destroy—The Power of Units—Joys that will not Wither—Protest against Narrowness and Sectarianism.

THE prophets following Daniel in our arrangement of the Canon, are commonly called the minor prophets. They inherit this name, because some of them flourished at a later date than those called the greater prophets, because their prophecies are shorter, because their genius is commonly held to be of a humbler order, and because while their genuineness and inspiration are conceded, they have never bulked so largely in the eye of the Church. First in order of time is Jonah. He is supposed to have been the child of the widow of Zarephath, the boy who attended Elijah to the wilderness, the youth who anointed Jehu.

The Book of Jonah stands out of the Old Testament history of wars and conquests with a truthfulness to human nature and a loftiness of religious sentiment that more than vindicate its place in the Sacred Canon. It has been well said, if it were a foolish legend, why have so many self-conceited fools rejected it; and why has it been believed by Milton, by Newton, and by Him who spake as never man spake? The narrative is a part of those things which were written

aforetime for our instruction. It contains lessons to which we do well to take heed.

The prophet was sent on a mission to Nineveh, the most magnificent of all the capitals of the ancient world—"great even unto God." It included parks, gardens, fields, people and cattle within its vast circumference—town and country blending in one, and ample groves and meadows mingling with the streets and palaces. Modern discoveries enable us to form a vivid picture of Nineveh, as it must have appeared when Jonah entered it. Large mounds of earth, that lay undisturbed for centuries upon the banks of the Tigris, have been explored; and within these mounds magnificent sculptures, remains of palaces, and other memorials have been found, that show the grandeur of the ancient city. Jonah describes it as so large that it took three days to walk around it. Mr. Layard confirms this statement, the circumference of the space where the mounds of ruins are found being 60 miles. It was surrounded by a wall 100 feet in height, on which were 1500 towers; and the top of the wall was broad enough for three chariots to be driven abreast.

APPEARANCE OF NINEVEH.

The passenger on the street might behold the sheep in the meadow and the plow in the furrow; while the breeze, loaded with fragrant odors, might also bear upon it the yell of the distant chase. Here the haughty noble might be seen gazing proudly from his Assyrian charger; there the bold warrior, in his blue uniform, looking defiance on the vulgar crowd. The rare structure and gorgeous splendor of the palaces and public buildings could not fail to make a deep impression on the stranger. Every entrance seemed guarded by gigantic animals beautifully carved from solid stone; bulls and lions with the wings of the eagle and the face of a man, or figures of a man with the face of an eagle, sentineled every approach. The interior of the palaces and public buildings

was fitted up with extraordinary splendor, and it was impossible not to be struck with the very remarkable and skillful combinations of color that were apparent in their decoration. In the palaces, chambers might be seen lined with sculptured slabs, containing historical pictures, with inscriptions, written in a strange, wedge-shaped, or arrow-headed character. These pictures represented the history of the empire, especially its warlike achievements. One common feature in them could not be marked without a shudder,—the sad evidence of cruelty which they afforded. Here might be seen a picture exhibiting a row of captives, each impaled on an iron spike; another, representing a group undergoing the process of being flayed alive; while in a third, a row, with halters around their necks or hooks in their tongues, were dragged about to feast the eyes of their conquerors, preparatory to their being put to a more terrible death. The wickedness of the place was in proportion to its wealth and magnificence. In some respects it was hardly less guilty than Sodom or Gomorrah.

ASSYRIAN KING PUTTING OUT EYES OF CAPTIVES.

THE FIRST MISSIONARY TO THE HEATHEN.

To this heathen city the prophet was sent to exercise his holy office. It is the first recognition of the distinct claims of the heathen world on the justice and mercy of God. For ages, to keep the true religion pure, it had been necessary to confine it to the children of Jacob, and to segregate them as much as possible from other nations. The ceremonial law,

in its burdensome ritual and innumerable observances, served as a middle wall of partition, excluding the Gentiles from religious privileges. Proselytes, indeed, were welcome. The law of Moses laid down directions for their admission into the commonwealth of Israel. But this had a bearing merely on individuals. The Gentiles, as a whole, were cast out beyond the pale of the visible Church, and given over to the reign of spiritual death. But now, in the onward progress of the great redemption, a prophet is sent out from the chosen people, to the most renowned city of heathendom then on the face of the earth. He is sent, that by the effects of his preaching, an illustration may be given, on the grandest scale, of the boundless power of human repentance, and that already, in advance, the great Gospel doctrine may be vindicated, that God is "mighty to save," "able to save to the uttermost," and willing to save poor, perishing, penitent sinners of every creed and nation. Suddenly, when the pall of thick darkness and the shadow of death hangs over all nations, save the little central spot of Immanuel's Land; when Jehovah might appear to have resigned all government of the world, save in that one corner where His worship was established by special covenant, and yet was almost overthrown; when the Most High is well nigh come to be regarded as a local and limited deity, having no control and taking no oversight of other lands; when Israel, perverting His grace, has come self-righteously to think they can reckon by right on His favor, and tamper with impunity with His law—a herald crosses the sacred precincts where the spirit and word of prophecy have hitherto dwelt, and goes out into the thick darkness, carrying with him the sound of Jehovah's voice, and the torch of Jehovah's word; and that his mission may not fail to compel the attention of all succeeding ages, it is adorned with the most marvelous and romantic incident, and with the most striking, if not perplexing, developments of human character.

THE FLIGHT OF THE PROPHET.

No wonder that Jonah, charged with this solitary, unparalleled and unique commission, should hesitate and flee. We see him hasting down from the hills of Galilee to the one Israelite port of Joppa. For the first time in the sacred history, we embark on the stormy waters of the Mediterranean, in a ship bound for the distant port of Tarshish on the coast of Spain. The prophet sinks into the deep sleep of the wearied traveler as soon as he gets on board after his hurried journey. This is no proof of insensibility. Sleep often says to the eyes of the happy, "Burn on, through midnight, like the stars; ye have no need of me;" but to those of the wretched, "I will fold you in my mantle and bury you in sweet oblivion till the morning come." In certain states of desolation, there lies a power which draws down irresistibly the coverlet of sleep. Not in the fullness of security, but of insecurity; not in perfect peace, but in desperate recklessness, Jonah was overpowered with slumber. He slept, but the sea did not. The sight of a slumbering sinner can awake the universe. But the rocking ship, the roaring sea, and the clamorous sailors, only confirmed the slumber of the prophet. Roused he is at last by the ship-master, who is more terrified at his unnatural sleep, than at the sea's wild vigil, "What meanest thou, O sleeper! Arise and call upon thy God!"

How different the sleep of Jonah from the sleep of Jesus in the storm on Galilee! The one is the sleep of desperation, the other of peace; the one that of the criminal, the other of the child; the one that of God's fugitive, the other of His favorite; the darkness over the head of the one is the frown of anger, but over the other only the mask upon the forehead of love! But each is the center of his several ship, each in different ways the cause of the storm; in each lies the help of the vessel; each must awake, the criminal to lighten the ship of his burden, the Son to rebuke the winds and the waves and produce immediately a great calm.

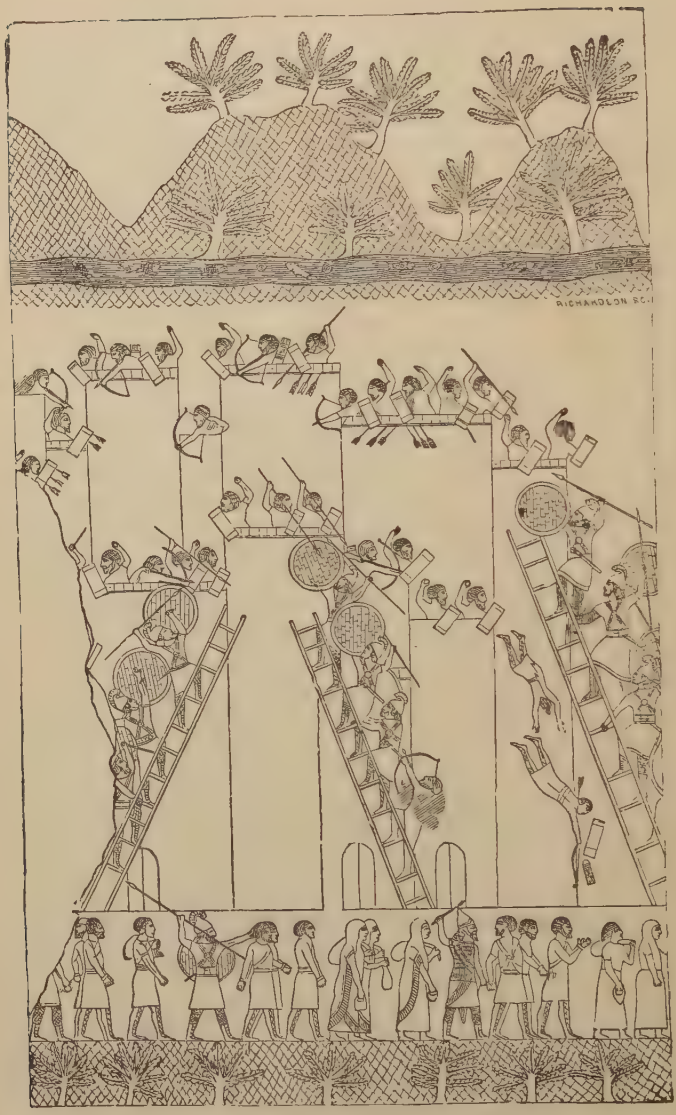
The moment Jonah entered the ship, instinct probably told the sailors that all was not right with him, and now they attacked him with their "brief accumulated inquiries." "Why hath this happened to us? What doest thou? Whence art thou? What is thy country? Of what people art thou?" As all the truth concerning him was developed, and it became evident that the storm would not cease while he was on board the vessel, he boldly faces the punishment of his transgression. "Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea." But the good seamen, heathen as they are, struggle against the dreadful necessity which Jonah puts before them. They row with a force which seems to dig up the waves under their efforts. But higher and higher, higher and higher, the sea surges against them, like a living creature gaping for its prey. At last the noble mariners, with a prayer to God, yield up the victim whom all those waves demand, and at once their fury abates. A sullen growl of satisfaction first, then a loud signal for retreat, and lastly a whisper commanding universal silence, seems to testify that the sacrifice is accepted and the ship is safe. This is the *first deliverance* of the narrative, and it is the blessing of God upon the honest hearts and active hands of "those that go down to the sea in ships, and do their business in great waters."

But there is deliverance for Jonah too. In saving the sailors, God does not intend to destroy *him*, and he puts him in temporary peril only that he may become the instrument of saving a vast multitude that in the distant heathen city are waiting for his message. Emerging from the lowermost deep, and attracted, it might be, by the wondrous silence which had followed the wondrous storm, appeared a "great fish," one of the huge monsters which are described in the Psalms as sporting in the strange sea, and received the prophet into its capacious maw, and descended with him to the bottom of the sea There, with God's vast ocean pressing against the sides of his living dungeon, his prayers broken by the lashing of the mon

ster's tail, and the grinding of his teeth, he thinks of the far-off Temple, the privileges of which he had never so much valued as now when, seen from "the belly of hell," it seems the very gate of heaven! The river of the ocean whirls him round in its vast eddies; the masses of sea-weed enwrap him as in grave-clothes; the rocky roots of the mountains as they descend into the sea appear above him, as if closing the gates of earth against his return. At length he is thrown out on the shore nearest Assyria. His hymn of thanksgiving succeeds. The mighty fish is lost sight of, as but the transitory instrument of deliverance. That on which the prophet lays stress is not the mode of escape, but the escape itself.

NINEVEH IS WARNED AND REPENTS.

And now the commission of Jonah is renewed, and this time accepted and executed. Alone, and unnoticed in a crowd composed of the confluence of all nations, he enters the capital of the East. After, perhaps, a short silence, the silence of wonder at the sight of that living ocean, he raises his voice. At first, feeble, tremulous, scarcely heard, it is swollen by every tributary street, as he passes, into a loud imperious sound, which all the cries of Nineveh are unable to drown. "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." It is but a simple sentence, uttered again and again in terms unvaried; its tones a deep monotony, as if learned from a dying wave. Its effect is aided, too, by the appearance of the prophet. Haggard by watchfulness, soiled by travel, "bearded like the pard," with a wild, hungry fire in his eye, he seems hardly like a being of this earth. Nineveh is smitten to the heart. Ere he has pierced one-third of it, it capitulates to the message, the voice, the figure of this stranger, to the great power of the truth, the God behind him, and the conscience within echoing and enforcing his utterances. The piercing cry reaches the king on his throne. Remorse for the wrong and robbery and violence of genera-



ASSYRIAN MODE OF TAKING A CITY.

tions is awakened. A fast is proclaimed, and all, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. The dumb animals are included in the universal mourning. The great and proud city is suddenly smitten into the most profound humiliation But still on, amid these trembling, fasting multitudes, slowly and steadfastly moves the solitary man, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, but uttering, in the same unmitigated tone, the same incessant cry, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

Upon the penitence of the vast population of the great Assyrian capital, the Divine decree of destruction is revoked. Expecting the city to be destroyed by earthquake or flame from heaven, the prophet had gone out of it, and erected a booth or shelter to screen his head from the sun; and he is there when he hears of the respite granted to the city. A fiercer fire than the sun's is now kindled in his heart; and mingling with the heat which the booth imperfectly alleviates, it drives him almost to frenzy. He is angry, and wishes to die—to die, because millions are *not* to die. God prepares a large gourd, or species of palm, which springs up like an exhalation, and steeps his head with grateful coolness. Jonah is glad of it; it somewhat mollifies his indignant feelings, and under its shadow he sinks into repose. He awakes; with the scorching blast of the early morning the luxuriant shelter withers away; a worm has destroyed it; the arid leaves seem of fire as they bend above his head, in the vehement east wind. He renews in bitterer accents the cry of yesterday, "It were better for me to die than to live." Then, in his despairing faintness, he receives the revelation of the Divine character, which is to him as that of the burning bush to Moses, or of the vision on Horeb to Elijah. "Thou hast had pity on the gourd for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between

their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" The rebuke is thrust home to the narrow selfishness which could lament over the withering of his own bower, and yet complain that judgment had not been carried out against the penitent empire of Nineveh. The lesson is taught that God is bound by no strict logical necessity to enforce the destruction of His creatures; that His mercy is not limited by the narrow interpretation which His messengers put upon the messages which they bear; and that no theory of theirs, as to the absoluteness of the decrees which they utter in "preaching the preaching which He bids them," can ever change one syllable of His recorded name, "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and slow to anger."

Other lessons there are in this narrative. To fly from duty is to fly to danger. Deliverance from danger often conducts to new and ten-fold perils, and involves ten-fold responsibilities. The voice of an earnest man is a match for millions. Let no one say in despair, "I am but one;" in his unity, as in the unity of a sword, lies his might; if his metal be true, his singleness is strength; he may be multiplied, but he cannot be divided. Minorities of one often do the real work of mankind. Jonah stands out a striking proof of the power which units, when placed on the right side—that of God and truth—exert over the masses of men. As the figure one is to the ciphers, few or many, which range after it, so is the hero, the saint, the poet, the prophet, and the sage, to their species.

Jonah would rather have seen the whole city of Nineveh swept away, than that his own words should seem to fail. How many of us, like him, are afraid of being lowered in the eyes of our fellow-men, of having our character for veracity impeached, of being esteemed false prophets! When we find all going smoothly—none opposing us—when we are respected, valued and looked up to by our friends and neighbors, then how easy does it seem to be religious! But let us be scorned and despised, then comes the bitter trial.

Again, what the gourd was to Jonah, such are oftentimes the trifling enjoyments of the world to us. We shelter ourselves under them. We find our pleasure in them. We forget that "this is not our rest." Then comes the worm, and withers all that we have set our hearts upon, and they perish before our eyes.

Oh, for some better and more solid enjoyment than grows on the soil of this world! Oh, for something that will last and never fade, something that will satisfy and rejoice the heart! May you never fancy that you have found this, dear reader, until you have found it in Christ. Here is a "Tree of Life," which no worm can wither, and which no time can decay. Here, in the midst of a desolate world, is "a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat." Under this shelter alone is rest, and peace, and joy for the weary soul. With true gratitude and love may each of us address to God the words which Jonah used in savage irony, "I know that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil."

In that scorching blast that beat upon the head of Jonah, when he "fainted and wished in himself to die," the sacred narrative leaves him. There, to the imagination, still sits the stunned and downcast prophet, the great city in sight, and shining in the sun, the low of hundreds of cattle in his ears, the bitter wind in his eyes and in his hair, disappointment and chagrin in his heart, and, hanging over his naked head, the fragments of the withered plant. Let us hope that he arose from under the gourd, humbled, melted, instructed, and resumed the grand functions of his office, to exercise them henceforth, not for his "country" or Church, still less for his own reputation, but for the good of poor perishing men, rejoicing in every display of God's mercy, whether to Jew or Gentile. His fear evidently was that he would be regarded at home as a false prophet, his instructions no longer be heeded, his people be confirmed in their rebellion against Jehovah.

and thus injury come to both him and them from the salvation of Nineveh. For mark the emphasis with which he speaks of his country. "*My country!*" While there, before starting on his perilous mission, he had fears as to how it would terminate; and now his heart is full of heaviness as he thinks of its probable bearing on his "country." He anticipates with perfect agony the laughter and ridicule with which he would be received on his return, as having gone on a fool's errand; threatening the greatest city in the world with destruction in a specified time, and returning without a hair of their heads being injured! He foresees the utter weakening of his hands, the destruction of his usefulness, among his countrymen. The overthrow of Nineveh by Divine judgments, according to his proclamation, would most mightily have strengthened him, on his return to his countrymen, enforcing the repentance which he would gladly preach to them. He expected to return with a terrible instance to quote of the vindictive justice of God, the heat of the Divine displeasure against sin, and he hoped, through his preaching, to promote the glory of God at once in the salvation of Israel, and the damnation of the Ninevites. His theories of "Divine glory," his selfishness, his patriotism, his bigotry, his sectarianism, all have received damaging blows. His theology must be remodeled. Unintentionally he, a true son of the Church of his day, and true prophet of the Lord, has been the means of bringing vast multitudes of the heathen to cast themselves upon the "uncovenanted," and gloriously free mercy of the Lord. Thus, a century before Isaiah, the Evangelical Prophet, Jonah stands out as the Apostle of the Gentiles, foretelling their destruction, and accomplishing their salvation, the involuntary and unconscious instrument of their redemption. Thus the Jewish prophet was taught that he was to be the herald of God's mercy as well as of God's righteousness to all the nations. God's righteousness is shown in making men righteous. If they

will submit to be made so, then this end is accomplished; if they resist, then His vengeance will go forth, not because He has forgotten mercy, but because that which is unmerciful and hard-hearted shall not possess the earth which He claims for His dominion, nor oppress the creatures whom He has made for freedom and happiness. In the interest of love, He will destroy the oppressor.

In the popular traditions of East and West, Jonah's name alone has survived the lesser prophets of the Jewish Church. It still lives, not only in many a Mussulman tomb along the coasts and hills of Syria, but in the thoughts and devotions of Christendom. The marvelous escape from the deep was made an emblem of the deliverance of Christ Himself from the jaws of death and the grave. The great Christian doctrine of the efficacy of repentance received its chief illustration from the repentance of the Ninevites at the preaching of Jonah. There is hardly any figure from the Old Testament which the early Christians in the catacombs so often took as their consolation in persecution as the deliverance of Jonah on the sea-shore, and his naked form stretched out in the burning sun beneath the sheltering gourd; and these conspire with the story itself in proclaiming the wider lesson of which we have spoken. It is the protest of theology against the excess of theology—it is the faithful delineation, through all its various states, of the dark, sinister, selfish side of even great religious teachers. It is the grand biblical appeal to the common instincts of humanity, and to the universal love of God, against the narrow dogmatism of sectarian polemics. There has never been "a generation" which has not needed the majestic revelation of sternness and charity, each bestowed where most deserved and where least expected, in the "sign of the Prophet Jonah."

To all who would sacrifice the cause of humanity to some professional or theological difficulty is the startling truth addressed, "DOEST THOU WELL TO BE ANGRY?"

"God repented of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them, and He did it not." The foredoomed destruction of the wicked, the logical consistency of the prophet's teaching, must go for nothing before the justice and "the great kindness" of God—before the claims even of the unconscious heathen children, and the dumb, helpless cattle. Nineveh shall be spared, although the prophet has declared that in ·ty days it shall be overthrown.

THE PROPHET OF GRANDEUR.

HABAKKUK.

XI.

HABAKKUK.

Intellectual influences of the Bible—Its Effects upon Literature—Bunyan, Milton, Addison, Byron, Goethe, Ruskin—Franklin at Versailles—Sublimity of Habakkuk—The Prophet's Inward Experience—Cast down at the Sufferings of the Righteous and the Prosperity of the Wicked—"The Just shall live by Faith."

In order to form some conception of the influence of the Scriptures upon the minds of the millions who have read them, let each reader ask himself the question, "what have I gained from their perusal?" And if he has read them with an ordinary degree of intelligence, there must arise before his memory a "great multitude which no man can number," of lofty conceptions of God—of glimpses into human nature—of thoughts "lying too deep for tears"—of pictures, still or stormy, passing from that page to the canvas of imagination to remain forever—of emotions, causing the heart to vibrate with a strange joy—and of perpetual whispered impressions, "this is the highest thought and language I ever encountered; I am standing on the pinnacle of literature." He will remember how often he has returned to this volume, and found the charm remaining, and the fire still burning, and the fountain of thought and feeling still flowing—how he has found every sentence a text, and how many texts resemble deep and deepening eyes, "orb within orb, deeper than sleep or death"—how each new perusal has shown firmament above firmament, rising in the book as in the night sky, till at last he has fallen on his knees, and, forgetting to read, begun to wonder and adore—how he has taken up the book again and again, and found that it was not only a telescope—to show

him things above, but a microscope to show him things below, a mirror to reflect his own heart, and a magic glass to bring the future near—until at last he has exclaimed, "How dreadful is this book—none other than the book of God, and the gate of heaven!" Multiply this, the experience of one, by an unknown number of millions, and you have the answer to the question as to the direct intellectual influences of the Scriptures upon those who have really read them.

But what is their influence as we trace it upon the pages of modern authors, and reflected from thence upon the world? What have been the effects of the Bible upon literature? We can answer this question only by referring to a few of the leading lights of the literary world.

Spenser's "Faery Queen," in its pure moral tone, and its gorgeous allegory, betrays the diligent student of the "Song," the parables, and the prophets. George Herbert's "Temple" proclaims him a poet "after God's own heart;" it is cool, chaste and still, as the Temple of Jerusalem on the evening after the buyers and sellers were expelled. Milton seems almost a belated bard of the Bible. He cried aloud to the Eternal Spirit to send the seraphim to touch his lips with a live coal from the altar. His writings have a sifted purity we seldom find out of Scripture, and quotations from the Bible fall sweetly into their places along his page, and find at once suitable society. Wharton, in an ingenious paper in the "Adventurer," ascribes Milton's superiority over the ancients to the use he has made of Scripture.

Bunyan seems to have read scarcely a book but the Bible. When he quotes it, it is by chapters at a time, and he has nearly quoted it all. He seems to think and dream, as well as speak and write, in Scripture language. Scripture imagery serves him for fancy, and Scripture words for eloquence. He alone could have counterfeited a continuation of the Bible! Macaulay, sacrificing the truth on the sharp prong of an antithesis, says there were, in their age, but two great creative

minds in England, the one was the author of Paradise Lost, and the other of Pilgrim's Progress. It would be more correct to say that both seemed incarnations of the spirit of Hebrew poetry, and that the tinker had more of it than the elaborate poet. The age of Amos seemed to have rolled round, when from among the lowest of the people sprang up suddenly this brave man, like the figure in his own Pilgrim, and cried out to the Recorder of immortal names, "Set mine down," and the song was straightway raised over him—

"Come in, come in,
Eternal glory thou shalt win."

But there were in that age other men of original genius besides Milton and Bunyan; and almost all of them had baptized it at "Siloa's brook, which flowed hard by the oracle of God." Jeremy Taylor soared and sang like Isaiah. John Scott copied the severe sententiousness and moral anatomy of James; and had besides touches of sublimity, reminding you of the loftier of the minor prophets. Barrow reasoned as if he had sat, a younger disciple, at the feet of Paul's master, Gamaliel. John Howe rose to calm Platonic heights, less through the force of Plato's attraction than that of the beloved disciple. And Richard Baxter caught, carried into his pulpit, and sustained even at his solitary desk, the old fury of pure and passionate zeal for God, hatred of sin, and love to mankind, which shook the body of Jeremiah, and flamed round the head and beard and shaggy raiment of the Baptist.

In the century that succeeded, we find numerous traces of the influences of the Bible. The allegories, and all the other serious papers of Addison, are tinged with its spirit. He loves not so much its wilder and higher strains; but the lovelier, softer, simpler, and more pensive parts of the Bible, are very dear to the gentle "Spectator." The stories of Joseph and Ruth are the models of his exquisite simplicity; and the 8th and 104th Psalms, of his quiet and timorous grandeur. Pope's

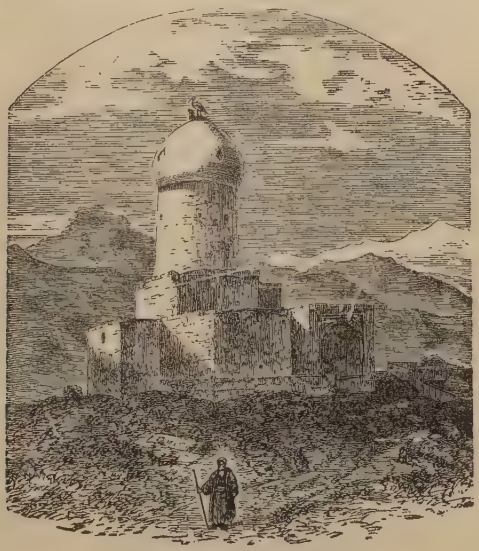
Messiah owes its superiority to Virgil's Pollio, entirely to the Hebrew poets. Thomson's Hymn is avowedly in imitation of the latter Psalms; and his mind, in its sluggish magnificence, and lavish ornaments, is distinctly Oriental. Every page of the "Seasons" shows an imagination early influenced by the breadth, fervor and magnificence of prophetic song. Johnson, too, in his Rasselas, Rambler, and Idler, is often highly Oriental, and has caught, if not the inmost spirit, at least the outer roll and volume, of the style of the prophets. Burke, in his Regicide Peace, approaches them far more closely, and exhibits their spirit as well as style, their fiery earnestness, their abruptness, their impatience, their profusion of metaphor, their "doing well to be angry, even unto death," and the contortions by which they were delivered of their message, as of a demon. How he snatches up their words, like the fallen thunderbolts of the Titan war, to heave at his and their foes. No marvel that the cold-blooded eighteenth century thought him mad.

WOMEN GRINDING GRAIN.

Burns admired his Bible better than he ever cared to acknowledge, and during his last illness, was often seen with it in his hands. Some of the finest passages in both his prose and verse are colored by Scripture. But that dislike to it natural to those who disobey its moral precepts, was aggravated in him by the wretchedly cold critical circles among whom he fell

Cowper, the most timid of men, was the most daring of poets. He was an oracle hid, not in an oak, but in an aspen. In an age when religion was derided, when to quote the Bible was counted eccentric folly, when Lowth was writing books to prove the prophets "elegant," a nervous hypochondriac ventured to prefer them by infinitude to all other writers,

defended their every letter, drank into their sternest spirit, and poured out strains which, if not in loftiness or richness, yet in truth, energy, earnestness and solemn pathos, seem omitted or mislaid "burdens of the Lord." Blessings on this noble "castaway," rising momentarily o'er the moonlit surge which he deemed ready to be his grave, and shouting at once words of praise to that Luminary which he believed was never to rescue him, and words of warning to those approaching the same fearful waters.



REPUTED TOMB OF ESTHER.

Scott, as a writer, knew the force of Scripture diction; as a man, the hold of Scripture truth upon the Scottish heart; as a poet, the unique inspiration which flowed from the Rock of Ages; and has, in his works, made a masterly use of all this varied knowledge. Rebecca might have been the sister of Solomon's spouse. Her prose speeches rise as to the sound of cymbals, and her "hymn" is immortal as a psalm of David. David Deans is only a little lower than the patri-

archs; and time would fail us to enumerate the passages in his better tales, which, approaching near the line of high excellence, are carried beyond it by the dextrous and sudden use of "thoughts that breathe," or "words that burn," from the Book of God. Byron is deeply indebted to the Bible. In painting "dark bosoms," he has often availed himself of the language of that book, which is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Many of his finest poems are just expansions of that strong line he has borrowed from it—

> "The worm that cannot sleep, and never dies."

His "Hebrew Melodies" have sucked out their sweetness from the Psalms and prophets; and "Cain" employs against God the power it derives from His Book.

Goethe, we know, admired the Bible as a composition, took great interest in its geography, and had his study hung round with maps of the Holy Land. Need we name Chalmers and Irving—those combinations of the prophet of the old, and the preacher of the new economy? Isaac Taylor's gorgeous figures are elaborately copied from those of Scripture, although they sometimes, in comparison with them, remind you of that root of which Milton speaks—

> "The leaf was darkish, and had prickles in it,
> But in another country, as he said,
> Bore a bright golden flower, *but not in this soil*,"

The Eastern spirit is within them; they want only the Eastern day.

Prof Wilson approaches more closely than any modern since Burke, to that wild prophetic movement of style and manner which the bards of Israel exhibit—nay, more nearly than even Burke, since with Wilson it is a perpetual afflatus; he is like the he-goat in Daniel, who came from the west, and touched not the ground; his "Tale of Expiation," for instance, is a current of fire. Thomas Carlyle concentrates a fury, enhanced by the same literary influences, into deeper

straiter, more molten and terrible torrents. Ruskin confesses that he owes "the best part of his taste in literature" to the fact that he was forced to learn a great deal of the Bible by heart in childhood.

Extracts from the Bible always attest and vindicate their origin. They nerve what else in the sentences in which they occur is pointless; they clear a space for themselves, and cast a wide glory around the page where they are found. Taken from the *classics of the heart*, all hearts vibrate more or less strongly to their voice. It is even as David felt of old toward the sword of Goliath, when he visited the high priest and said: "There is none like that, give it me;" so writers of true taste and sympathies feel, when they have certain thoughts and feelings to express, a longing for that sharp two-edged sword, and an irresistible inclination to cry, "none like that, give it us; this bright Damascus blade alone can cut the way of our thought into full utterance and victory."

The Prophet Habakkuk furnishes an eminent illustration of the literary attractions of the Bible. The crowded splendors of his matchless pictures cannot be equaled outside of the sacred volume. When Benjamin Franklin was ambassador from this country at the court of France, he was a member of a literary club composed of the leading wits of Paris. It was "the godless eighteenth century," these men were skeptics, and the Bible was a frequent subject of ridicule. Franklin knew well their ignorance of it, and one evening he said he had met with a passage in an old writer, which had pleased him very much, and he wished to have their opinions upon it. He then read the third chapter of Habakkuk, and when they had exhausted their vocabulary in praise of its unequaled sublimity, he told them the source from which the extract had been taken.

The prophecy of Habakkuk is a Pompey's Pillar—tall, narrow, and insulated. It begins abruptly, like an arm suddenly shot up in prayer. "How long, O Jehovah, have I cried, and

Thou hast not hearkened! Why dost Thou show me iniquity and cause me to behold grievance?" Yet this reluctance to describe the frightful scenes he foresaw, is but the trembling vibration of the javelin ere it is launched, the hesitation of the accusing orator ere his speech has fully begun, the convulsive flutter in the lightning ere the bolt be sped. Over the heads of the transgressors of his people he speedily lifts up three words, which express all that follows, Behold, Wonder, Perish—words suitable to herald the coming of the Chaldeans, that "bitter and hasty nation," who were swift as the leopard and fierce as the evening wolf—as well as characteristic of the ardent soul of the prophet, who sees the flower before the bud, and finds out the crime by the torch of the punishment.

How solemn the stillness of the expectation produced by the closing words of the second chapter, "But Jehovah is in His holy temple, be silent before Him all the earth." As in summer the still red evening in the west predicts the burning morrow, so do these sublimely simple words announce that the ode, on its wide wings of shadowy fire, is at hand.

"God came from Teman, the Holy One from Paran; His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise." The procession begins in the wilderness. There, where still rise the three tower-like summits of Mount Paran, which, when gilded by the evening or morning sun, look like "horns of glory," the Great Pilgrim begins His progress. The light is His garment, and rays, as of the morning sun, shoot out from His hand. These are at once the horns and the hiding of His power. Like a dark raven, the plague flies before him. Wherever His feet rest, flashes of fire (or birds of prey) arise. He stands, and the earth moves. He looks through the clouds which veil Him, and the nations are scattered. As He advances, the mountains bow. Paran begins the homage: Sinai succeeds; the giants of Seir, and Moab, and Bashan fall prostrate, till every ridge and every summit has felt the awe of His presence On still He goes, and lo! the tents of Cushan

are uncovered, removed, and their wandering inhabitants vanish away; and the curtains of the land of Midian tremble as He passes by. But have even the waters perceived Him? Is He angry with the rivers? Has He breathed on them too? Jordan stands aside to let Him through dry-shod into Canaan's land. Once entered there, the hills imitate the terror of their eastern brethren, and tremble; the deeps of Galilee's sea and the Mediterranean utter their voice; the heights, from Olivet to Lebanon, lift up their hands in wonder; and as His arrows fly abroad, and His spear glitters, the sun stands still over Gibeon, and the moon over the valley of Ajalon. Nor does the awful Pilgrim repose till He has trampled on the nations of Canaan as He had on the mountains of the East, and till over their bruised heads and weltering carcasses He has brought aid to His people and salvation to His anointed.

ANCIENT TOMB.

This analysis fails to convey the rapid accumulation of metaphor, the heaving struggle of words, the boldness of spirit, the grandeur and sublimity of the prophet. Almost all the brighter and bolder images of Old Testament poetry are massed in this single strain. Chronology, geography, everything must yield to the purpose of the poet, which is, in every possible way, to do justice to his theme, in piling glory on glory around the march of God.

But the literary beauties of this book, notable as they are, concern us not so much as its moral significance. We have

here the inward experience of Habakkuk. He, more than any other of the prophets, represents the perplexities, not of the nation, but of the individual soul—the peculiar trial which tormented so many exalted spirits at his time. He, more than any other, has furnished to the Christian apostle the doctrine which forms the key-note of the three epistles to the Romans, the Galatians and the Hebrews. From this, its first appearance in the prophets, may best be learned the original and most comprehensive signification of Justification by Faith. He saw with grief the increasing contrast of sin and prosperity, innocence and suffering. The land seemed given up to ruffians who mocked at law and right, and did whatever was in the power of their hands. Whoever had seen or heard of the tyranny of Manasseh—the luxury and selfishness of the nobles—the poor neglected—the prophets persecuted—during the last agonies of the kingdom of Judah, might well be provoked into the skeptical, yet confiding prayer: "O Lord, how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear? And cry unto Thee out of violence, and Thou wilt not save? Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest Thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest Thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he? And makest men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things that have no ruler over them? They take up all of them with the angle, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag; therefore they rejoice and are glad. Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous. Shall they therefore empty their net, and not spare continually to slay the nations?"

He retires into himself; he mounts above the world to gain a calmer and loftier view, he stands upon his watch and sits upon his tower. Like Zephaniah the Divine watcher, like Elijah at Horeb, like Elisha on his tower by the Jordan, like

Isaiah when he heard the cry, "Watchman, what of the night?" he waits to see what the Divine answer to his doubts would be. At last it comes. It comes after long delay. "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak." It comes wrapt in contradictions—"tarrying and yet not tarrying." He was to write the vision plainly on the tablets, and not to be disappointed by its delay, or bewildered by its contradictions. "Behold he whose heart is lifted up within him shall not have his course smooth before him. But the just shall live by his faith." That brief oracle inspires Habakkuk with new life. He had waited in fear for the Divine message; his lips had quivered at the voice, his bones were consumed, his whole being troubled. But as his fear melts into hope, the prophet seems to be transformed for the moment into the psalmist; the ancient poetic fervor of Deborah is rekindled within him; the great days of old rise before him; and in that last lyrical outburst of Hebrew poetry, the wild struggle is at length calmed; a deep peace settles down over the close of the life which had begun in such a tempest of doubt and agitation. "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; although the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields yield no food; although the flocks be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." His last strain is as of a second David, leaping from crag to crag like the free gazelle, in a strength mightier than his own.

A heathen, and alas! how many a Christian, would be afraid to use the language of this prophecy, to reason thus with God concerning His judgments. He would cover his practical unbelief and inward murmuring with the hollow phrases, "No doubt all is for the best," "It is the will of God and must be right." The Jewish prophet believed in God as a Person, and not as a dark blank fate; and therefore he could boldly say, "I know this is *not* right. O Thou

who art altogether right, explain to me the contradictions in Thy universe; tell me why Thou sufferest evil to dwell in it. Give me some ground upon which I can stand when all is reeling and shaking around me. And let it be a ground upon which I may rest my hope, not for myself only, but for my race, upon which these oppressors are trampling."

The prophet's boldness is vindicated. His feet are planted upon the Rock of Ages. In answer to his prayer, the secret of all oppression, of that day or of ours, of the State, of the Church, or of whatever kind, is made known. The man "is lifted up" in himself, and "his soul is not upright in him. He thinks he has something of his own upon which he may exalt himself; therefore he treats human beings as if they were creeping things or fishes of the sea. Here, too, is the secret of the life of an Israelite, and of the man of God now; he "shall live by his faith." Feeling and knowing himself to be nothing, he casts himself wholly upon God. And anything which leads him to this faith is divine; no matter how dark the outward aspects in which it may come, no matter how deep the inward anguish it may produce. Here is the solution of the riddles of the universe; here is the key to God's dark and inscrutable ways. Not a solution which we can resort to as if it were a formula of ready application, which may stifle questioning and set our minds at ease. Not a key such as empirics and diviners use, pretending that they know all the wards of every mystery and can open it at their pleasure, but one to which the humble and the meek can resort when most baffled, when most ignorant—one which helps them to welcome their own tribulations, and to see in the tribulations of the world a sure witness that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. At the root of confusion is eternal order. Every dark power in nature, every human will, must work out the purposes of Eternal Love. Thus the saddest of all prophecies ends with a song; the stringed instruments

give out a music which is deeper than all the discords and wailings of creation.

Beautiful indeed is the spirit of Habakkuk, and expressing in another form the grand conclusion of Job, and of all earnest and reconciled spirits. A God so great must be good; and He who hath done things in the past so mighty and terrible, yet in their effects so gracious, may well be expected to pursue His own path, however inscrutable, to the ultimate good of the world and the Church, and now, as in the days of old, often to answer our prayers by works that are "fearful" as well as magnificent. But if the prophet, with his dim light, could give us so sublime an example of confidence in God, what exultation and joy should be ours who, in a higher sense than he knew, are permitted to walk and "live by faith"! The power which these words of the prophet exerted in forming the character of Luther, and giving direction to Protestantism, is a matter of history. Engaged in delivering exegetical lectures upon the Scriptures at Wittenberg, Luther came, in his private study of the divine word, to the seventeenth verse of the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and there read this passage from Habakkuk, "The just shall live by faith." It was a creative word for the Reformer and the Reformation.

Equally familiar to most of us is the beautiful paraphrase of the closing song of the prophet, given to us by one who, in a later age, had much of the spirit and faith of Luther:

"Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian while he sings;
It is the Lord who rises
With healing in His wings.
Set free from present sorrow,
We cheerfully can say,
Let the unknown to-morrow
Bring with it what it may,

"It can bring with it nothing
But He will bear us through;
Who gives the lilies clothing
Will clothe His people too.
Beneath the spreading heavens
No creature but is fed;
And He who feeds the ravens
Will give His children bread.

"Though vine nor fig tree neither
Their wonted fruit should bear.
Though all the fields should wither,
Nor flocks nor herds be there,
Yet God the same abiding,
His praise shall tune my voice;
For while in Him confiding,
I cannot but rejoice."

THE PROPHET OF LOVE.

ST. JOHN AT PATMOS.

XII.

JOHN.*

Did John resemble Jesus?—Jesus His Theme—His Epistles Love-Letters—"God is Love"—"We shall see Him as He Is"—His Gospel—"In the Beginning was the Word"—Visit of Nicodemus to Jesus—Jesus and the Blind Man—Lazarus and his Sisters—"Jesus Wept"—John the Seer of the Apocalypse—Its Terrors and Glories—Simplicity of John amid the Bursting Vials of this Mystic Volume—Is it a Poem?—Its Towering Imagery—Outline of the Book—It has Kept its Secret—Who Shall open it and Loose its Seals?

We need not be afraid to avow that we have our favorites among Scripture writers, and that a leading favorite is John. There was "one disciple whom Jesus loved"; and we plead guilty to loving the *writer* supremely too. It has been supposed by some, that there was a certain resemblance between the countenance of John, and that of Jesus. We figure the same sweetness in the smile, the same silence of ineffable repose upon the brow, the same mild luster in the eye. And, as long as John lived, he would renew to those who had known the Saviour the impressions made by his transcendent beauty, for transcendently beautiful he surely was. But the resemblance extends to the features of his composition, as well as of his face. It seems Jesus who is still speaking to us. The babe-like simplicity, the artlessness, the lisping out of the loftiest thoughts, the sweet undertone of utterance, the warm female-like tenderness and love, along with a certain Divine dogmatism, of the Great Teacher, are all found in an inferior measure in the writing of his Apostle. He has, too, a portion of that strange familiarity with Divine depths which distinguished his Master, who speaks of them always as if He were

*From Gilfillan.

lying in His Father's bosom. So John seems perfectly at home in heaven, and the stupendous subjects and scenery thereof. He is not like Paul, "caught up to Paradise," but walks like a native through its blessed clime. His face is flushed with the ardors of the eternal noon, and his style wears the glow of that celestial sunshine. He dips his pen in love—the pure and fervid love of heaven. Love-letters are his Epistles—the mere artless spillings of the heart—such letters as Christ might have written to the family at Bethany. Jesus is the great theme of John. His name perpetually occurs; nay, he thinks so often of Him, that he sometimes speaks of, without naming, Him. Thus, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." "Because that for His name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles." In his Epistles, occurs the sentence of sentences, "God is love." Why is not this sentence sown in our gardens in living green; framed and hung on the walls of our nurseries; taught as the first sounds to little ones? Why not call God Love? Why not instruct children to answer, when asked who made you? Love, the Father. Who redeems you? Love, the Son. Who sanctifies you? Love, the Holy Ghost? Surely on some day of balm did this golden word pass across the mind of the apostle, when, perhaps, pondering on the character, and recalling the face of Jesus, looking up to the glowing sky and landscape of the East, and feeling his own heart burning within him, he spread out the spark in his bosom, till it became a flame, encompassing the universe, and the great generalization leapt from his lips—"God is love." Complete as an epic, and immortal as complete, stands this poem-sentence, insulated in its own mild glory, and the cross of Jesus is below.

Imagination, properly speaking, is not found in the Epistles of John. They are full of heart, of practical suggestions, of intuitive insight, and of grave, yet tender dignity. You see

the aged and venerable saint seated among his spiritual children, and pouring out his rich simplicities of thought and feeling, while a tear now and then steals down his cheek. That passion for Christ, which was in John as well as in Paul, appears in the form of tranquil expectation. We shall soon "see him *as he is*." The orator is seen as he is, when he has shot his soul into his entire audience, and is ruling them like himself. The warrior appears as he is, when lifting up his far-seen finger of command, and leading on the charge. The poet is seen as he is, when the fine frenzy of inspiration is in his eye. So Jesus shall be seen as He is, when He comes garlanded and girt for the judgment; and when, blessed thought, His people shall be *like* Him, for the first look of that wondrous face of His shall complete and eternize the begun similitude, and the angelic hosts, perceiving the resemblance, seeing millions upon millions of reflected Christs, shall take up the cry, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation may enter in."

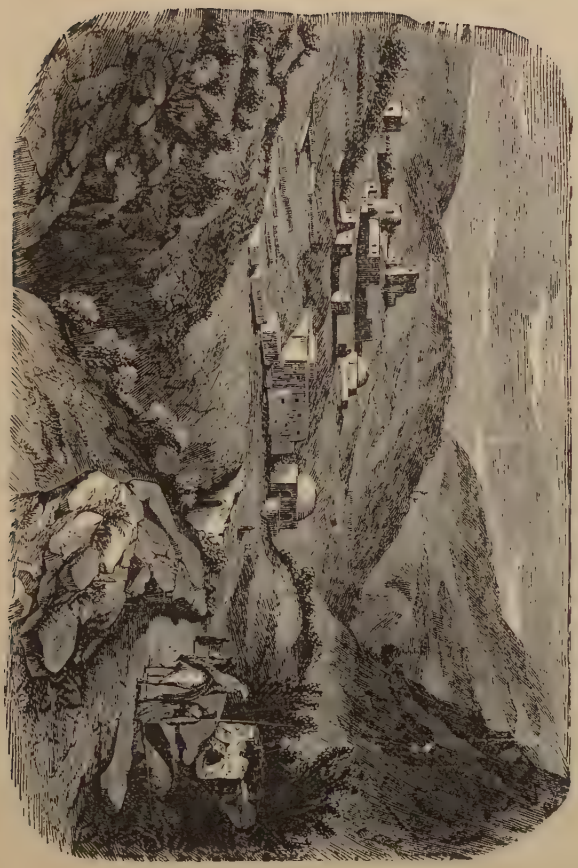
In his Gospel, John takes a loftier and more daring flight. He leaps at once into the Empyrean, and walks with calm, majestic mastery beside its most awful gulfs. How abruptly it begins! "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This emulates, evidently, the first sentence of Genesis, and ranks with it, and the first word, "God," in the Hebrews, as one of the three grandest introductions in literature. Our minds are carried back to the silent and primeval abyss. Over it there is heard suddenly a sound, which swells on and on, till to its tune that abyss conceives, labors, agonizes, and brings forth the universe, and the harmony dies aways in the words—"It is very good." Or, hear a true poet—

> "A power and a glory of silence lay,
> O'erbrooding the lonely primeval day,
> Ere yet unwoven the veil of light,
> Through which shineth forth the eternal might;

When the Word on the infinite void went forth,
And stirred it with pangs of a god-like birth;
And forth sprung the twain, in which doth lie,
Enfolded all being of earth and sky
* * * * * *
Then rested the Word, for its work was done."

To follow the history of the "Omnific Word"—the Logos, and darling thought of Plato—till he traced him entering into a lowly stable in Bethlehem, and wedding a village virgin's son, is John's difficult but divine task. Great, indeed, is the mystery of godliness, but not too great to be believed. The center of this creation is now supposed by many to lie, not in one orb vaster than his fellows, but in some obscure point. Thus, the God of it was found in fashion as a man, in the carpenter's son—the flower of man, and fellow of Jehovah—but with His glory disguised behind a robe of flesh, and with a cross for His death-place. Who has not at times been impressed with an intuitive feeling, as he walked along with a friend, of the exact magnitude of his mind, and of his true character, which came rushing upon him, and could not be gainsaid or disbelieved? John, too, as he lay on the bosom of the Saviour, and listened to His teaching, seems to have felt the burning impression, that through those eyes looked Omniscience, and that below that bosom was beating the very love of God, and said, "This is the true God, and Eternal Life." "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." No mere logical deduction could have led him to such a conclusion, apart from his profound intuitive persuasion; and that once formed, no catena of ten thousand links could have dragged him back from it. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it, but my Father which is in heaven."

Full to Christ, in his highest estate, from the very beginning of his Gospel, does this Evangelist point. The others commence with recounting His earthly ancestry, or the particulars of His birth. John shows Him at once as the "Lord


BETHANY

high and lifted up," descending from this eminence to wea His own body, and to save His people's souls. 'Tis the only complete history of Christ. It traces His connection with the Father, not through the blood of patriarchs and kings, but through the heavens, up directly to Jehovah's bosom. How grand this genealogy—"No man hath seen God, at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him!" And after announcing His true descent, he sets himself through the rest of the book, as if acting under the spell of a lover's fascination, to record every word which he could catch from those heavenly lips, as well as to narrate some of the tenderer and more private incidents in the life of the "Man of Sorrows."

We cannot refrain from referring to one or two scenes, exclusively related by John, of an intensely poetical character: one is, the visit of Nicodemus to Jesus by night. Meetings of interesting and representative men, especially when unexpected and amid extraordinary circumstances, become critical points in the history of mankind. Such was the meeting of Wallace and Bruce: the one representing Scotland's wild patriotic valor—the other, its calmer, more collected, and regal-seeming power. Such was that of old Galileo and young Milton in the dungeon—surely a theme for the noblest pencil—the meeting of Italy's old *savant*, and England's young scholar—the gray-haired sage, each wrinkle on his forehead the furrow of a star; and the "Lady of his College," with Comus curling in his fair locks, and the dream of Eden sleeping on his smooth brow; while the dim twilight of the cell, spotted by the fierce eyes of the officials, seemed the age too late, or too early, on which both had fallen—a meeting like that of morning, with her one star and coming day, and of midnight, with all her melancholy maturity, and hosts of diminished suns—a meeting like that of two centuries.

Nicodemus represented the inquiring and dissatisfied mind of Jewry—"*Young* Jerusalem"—sick of forms and quib-

bles, and yet unable to comprehend as yet a spiritual faith, tired of the present, but not ripe for the future; in love with Christ's miracles, but fearing His cross, and not despising its shame. And hence, when the evening fell down, with a step soft and silent as its shadows, he steals forth to meet with, and talk to, Jesus. Jesus, seeing in him the representative of a class—a class possessing many excellent qualities—who are sincere, whose belief in formalities and old saws and shams is shaken, who are anxious inquirers, but who unite to these characteristics weakness of will, timidity of disposition, and a lack of profound spirituality and self-sacrifice—tells him in effect, "Dream not that you can get to heaven in this tiptoe fashion, that you can always walk with the night, in seeking the day; you must all go my length, you must walk with me as well as to me; you must make a public and prominent stand for my cause; and that you may be able to do this, you must undergo a thorough and vital change; you must become a little child; you must be born again; you must sink down into the cradle ere you can hope to begin your ascent toward the throne."

How this strange yet noble paradox of our religion—the most staggering of all spiritual truths—must have sounded in the ear of Nicodemus, at the dead hour of night, when all else was sleeping, save the stars! Ah! ye bright watchers, and holy ones, ye have many voices, many words and languages are yours, but ye cannot utter such a truth as this—"Ye must be born again!" Tremble on, then, and remain silent, and allow him to speak who can!

There are modern Nicodemuses, who hold stolen interviews with Christ, and cast stolen glances at Christianity, and yet will not walk right onward with him, nor fully embrace his faith. These are of various classes; but we may here specify two. There are those, first, who, like Nicodemus, believe the Saviour's miracles, but do not feel the deep radical spirituality of His religion. Such men do desperate battle for the

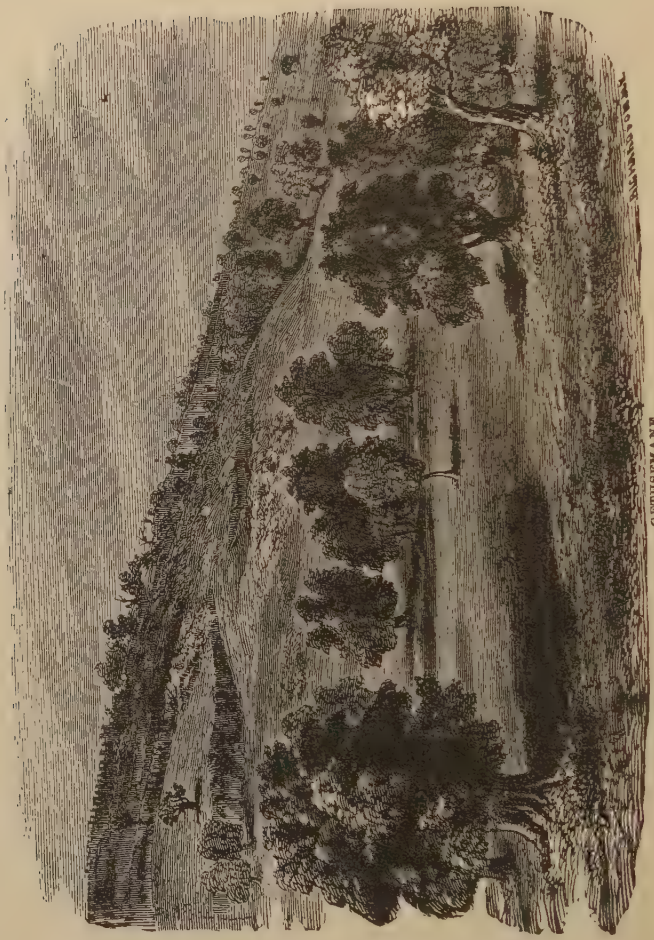
external evidence, but are strangers to the living power To them the words, "Ye must be born again," sound meaningless, empty, and strange. Others, again, a class numerous at present, are not in sympathy with the miraculous part of Christianity, scarcely believe in it, have, nevertheless, a liking for its spiritual and loftier aspects, but loath the humility and child-like submission which it requires of its votaries. They would see—what would they not see—if they would stoop? But stoop they will not. Its spirit, in other words, is not theirs; and, therefore, they behold Christ only at and through the night. If they were but, like Nicodemus, to wait and hear the words of Jesus, till the day should break and all the shadows should flee away! For he had, after all, a noble destiny. He followed Christ afar off; but he followed Him to the last. He was true to His dust. He, with Joseph of Arimathea, took him down from the cross; and both seem now chiseled supporters to his drooping head, and chiseled mourners over his lonely grave. Not men to support his living cause; they were marble to bend over, adorn, and defend his dead body.

The scene between Jesus, the blind man, and the Jews, related in the 9th chapter, is not only remarkable, as Paley notices, for its air of truth, but for its dramatic interest. The play of character with character—the manner in which the peculiarities of each are supported—the retorts of the blind man, so keen-witted and caustic—the undulations of the little story—and the close in the conversion of the poor man, all prove it a leaf from the book of life, but plucked and arranged by the hand of a master and an eye-witness. Equally natural, and tenderer far, is the history of Lazarus and his sisters. We say not, with an eminent living divine, that Jesus loved Mary with the pure and peculiar affection which the word generally implies; but certainly His heart regarded the circle of Bethany, of which she was one, with especial interest. Lazarus seems to have been an innocent—not in

weakness, perhaps, but in gentleness; one of those living pauses in the music of man whom it is pleasant and rare to encounter. In that house, the Saviour felt Himself, more than anywhere else, at rest; it was an arbor on His hill Difficulty, where He loved well to be, and where the three indwellers seemed to perform various parts in suiting and soothing His wide nature—Martha ministering to His necessities, Mary sitting at His feet, and Lazarus forming His mild and shorn shadow. The ministering spirit, the listening disciple, and the quiet reflector of His glory, were all there.

Into this loving circle, the entrance of Jesus did not prevent that of death. And who needs to be reminded of the melting circumstances of that death—of the slow approach of the Saviour—of the meeting with Martha—of Mary casting herself down in her tears before Him, tears which seem to accuse His delay as the cause of her brother's death—of Christ's own troubled spirit and weeping eyes—or of the brief, but victorious duel with death, at the mouth of the cave, at the close of which the dead-alive came forth, and the yawn of the grave behind seemed that of the disappointment of the last enemy himself, and the light of returning life in Lazarus' eyes, the first spark of the general resurrection? "Jesus wept." It is the shortest sentence in the Bible. But sooner than have wanted that little sentence, should we have consented that all books but the Bible should have perished—that the entire glories of an earthly literature had sunk into the grave of forgetfulness. For the tears of the Divine Man are links binding us immediately to the throne of God, and the rainbow which is around it.

John, indeed, seems to have set himself to preserve all the tearful passages which trickle down upon the history of Jesus. He was a gatherer of tears; and to him we owe such rich gleanings as the scene between himself, Jesus, and Mary, His mother, at the cross—the interview between Christ and Mary Magdalene, when the one word "Mary," uttered in His old



GETHSEMANE.

tones, opened the way to her heart, and made her feel that her Lord was the same to-day as He had been yesterday—and the cross-questioning of Simon, son of Jonas, carried on till he was grieved, and cried, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee."

Thus is the Gospel of John—the Odyssey of Christ's marvelous story—calmer, softer, and higher than the other three. The first three leave Christ with the halo of heaven around His head; while this deepens, perhaps, the grandeur of the Ascension, by dropping the veil over it. And in what a noble hyperbole does the warm-hearted Apostle close his narrative! "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Exaggeration this, of a very pardonable sort, if it refer only to the literal deeds which our short-lived Saviour performed, or to the literal words of a three years' ministry. But it becomes literally true, if we look to the spiritual import and manifold influences of that life and that Gospel. These have overflowed earth, and spilled their golden drops throughout the universe. That "story of a life" has passed already into almost every language, and into innumerable millions of hearts. Already men, amid trackless wildernesses, in every region of the world, are blessing their bread and their water in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, or looking up in silent worship, as they see the Cross of the South at midnight, bending in the glimmering desert of the tropical air. Nay, as astronomers tell us, that there is an era at hand when that splendid constellation shall be seen in our hemisphere, as well as in the south, and shall peacefully shine down the glories of Arcturus and Orion; so there is a day coming when all nations shall call Christ blessed, and the whole earth be filled with His glory. It can be done, for it is in God's power; it shall be done, for it is in His prophecy.

That this tender-hearted and babe-like Apostle should have

become the seer of the dreadful splendors of the Apocalypse—that its crown of fire should be seen sitting on the head of the author of the Epistle to the Elect Lady, may seem strange, and has, along with other difficulties, induced many to deny to John the authorship of this mystic volume. For a resolution of the external difficulties, we refer our readers to the critical works which abound. The intellectual difficulty does not seem to us very formidable. The Apocalypse differs not more widely from the Epistles, than Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," from his "Fears in Solitude;" or, than Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound," from his "Stanzas written in Dejection, near Naples." Often authors seem to rise or to sink into spheres quite alien, and afar from the common dwelling-place of their genius. Their style and language alter. They are caught above themselves, like "the swift Ezekiel, by his lock of hair;" or they slip momentarily down into abysses of strange bathos. So with John. In a desert island, with his mind thrown out, by this very solitude, into the obscure prospects of the future—with the "visions of God" bowing their burden upon his soul—what wonder that his language should change, his figures mix, and his spirit even, and genius, undergo transfiguration?

Nay, we fancy a peculiar beauty in this selection of John. Who has not seen a child astray in a populous city, shielded by her very weakness, safe, as if seated by her mother's knee? Beautiful and melting, to grandeur, this spectacle; but finer still that of John, lost and safe in his simplicity and innocence, amid the bursting vials, slow-opening seals, careering chariots, conflicting multitudes, and cataracts of fire and blood, which fill this transcendent vision! The helplessness of the seer adds to the greatness of the spectacle; and we feel this is no elaborate work of a visionary artist—it is the mere transcript of a sight which came upon his soul; and no lamb ever looked with more innocent, fearless unconsciousness, upon an eclipse passing over his glen, than does

John regard the strange terrors and tumultuating glories of the Apocalypse. Once, indeed, he "falls down as dead"; but his general attitude is that of quiet, though rapt reception.

It is, indeed, a tumultuating glory that of the Revelation. He who has watched a thunder-storm half-formed, or a bright but cloudy sunset, must have observed, with the author of the "Lights and Shadows," "a show of storm, yet feeling of calm, over all that tumultuous yet settled world of cloud." It seemed a tempest of darkness or of light arrested in mid career. An image of the Apocalypse! It is a hubbub of magnificence melting into beauty, and of beauty soaring into sublimity—of terror, change, victory, defeat, shame, and glory, agonies, and ecstasies, chasing each other over a space beneath which hell yawns, above which heaven opens, and around which earth now lightens with the glory of the one, and now darkens with the uprising smoke of the other. Noises, too, there are; the sound of chariots running to battle; the opening of doors in heaven, as if answering the revolving portals of the pit; rejoicings heard in heaven, wailings arising from hell; now the speech of dragons, now the voice of lambs, and anon the roar of lions; great multitudes speaking, earthquakes crashing, trumpets sounding, thunders lifting up their voices—above all this, heard at intervals, the New Song from the lips of the redeemed, amid it, coming up, the thin and thrilling cry of the "souls under the altar"; and behind it, and closing the vision, the united hallelujah of earth and heaven.

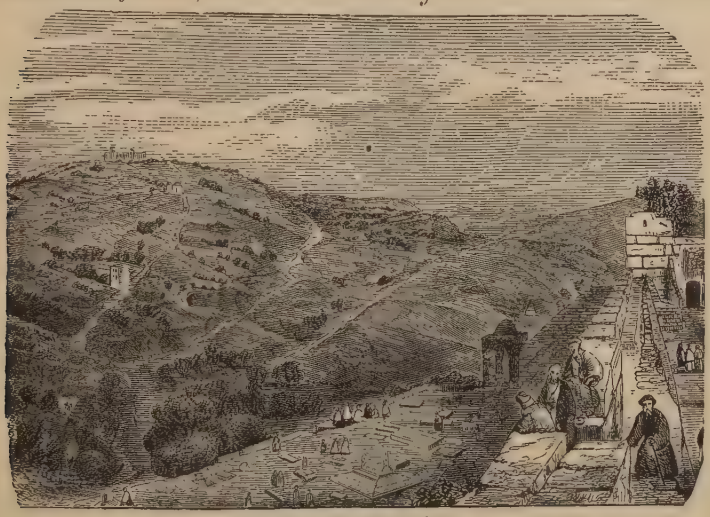
The book might thus almost be termed a spiritual oratorio, ready for the transcription of a Handel or a Haydn, and surely supplying a subject equal to "Samson," the "Creation," or the "Messiah." But where now the genius able to play it off, in all its variety and compass? And where the audience who would bear its linked, and swelling, and interchanging, and long-protracted harmonies? Music has echoed divinely the Divine words—"Let there be light"—and rolled out in

thunder surges the darkness of the crucifixion, and made the blindness of the Hebrew Hercules "darkness *audible*"; but it has yet a greater task to do, in incarnating in sound the dumb and dreadful soul of music sleeping in the Apocalypse.

But the question may here arise, To what order of poems does the Apocalypse belong—if, indeed, it be a poem at all? We have read much controversy as to its poetical character and form. On the one hand, it has been contended, that its structure, and the frequent occurrences of parallelisms, constitute it entirely a poem; while it is maintained, on the other, that, while poetical passages occur, its general cast is symbolical rather than poetical, and itself no more a poem than the Gospels. The truth is, the Scripture was composed partly of poetic statement and partly of poetic song—the former including in it, too, the expression of symbols, which, however plainly stated, are poetical in the truths they shadow as well as in the shadows themselves. This definition, we think, includes the whole Apocalypse. We have, first, in it the general dogmatic or hortatory matter of the three commencing chapters, which, though full of figure, has no rhythmical rise or melody; secondly, the symbols of the Temple and its furniture, the seals, beasts, etc.; thirdly, the songs and ascriptions of thanksgiving sprinkled throughout; and, fourthly, the great story, or plot, which winds its way amid all those strange and varied elements. Thus, all is poetical in essence, but part only poetical in form. The whole is a poem, *i. e.*, a creation; but a creation like God's, containing portions of more and of less intensity and sweetness. The difference between it and the Gospels is chiefly, that they are professedly histories, with fictitious and rhythmical parts; the Apocalypse professedly a vision, with much in it that must be taken literally, and with a profound meaning running through all its symbols and songs. Though a poem, it is not the less *essentially*, though it is the less *literally*, true.

But to what species of poem does it belong? By Eichhorn

and others, it is, on account of its changing actors, shifting scenes, and the presence of a chorus, ranked with the drama. Stuart calls it an epopee; others class it with lyric poems. We are not disposed to coincide entirely with any of these opinions. As well call a series of dissolving views, with the music to which they dissolve or enter, a regular drama, with a regular chorus, as the Apocalypse. A poetic recital of a poetic story it is; but both the story and the recital are far



MOUNT OF OLIVES.

from regular. Lyrics ring in it, like bells amid a midnight conflagration; but as a whole, it is narrative. Shall we then say of it merely—"I saw a great tumult, and knew not what it was?" Or shall we call it a poem-mystery, acknowledging no rules, including all styles and all forms, and gathering all diversified elements into one glorious, terrible, nondescript *composite?* Has it not unwittingly painted its own image in in one of those locusts, which it describes riding over the earth? It is, in its warlike genius, like "unto a horse prepared for the battle." It wears on its head a crown of gold—the gold of towering imagery. Its piercing intuition makes its "face

as the face of man, and its teeth as the teeth of a lion." Mystery, like the "hair of woman," floats around it, and hardens into a "breastplate of iron" over its breast. Its "tail stings like a scorpion," in the words—"If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the book of life, and out of the holy city." And its rapid and rushing eloquence is "like the sound of chariots—of many horses running to battle." *Here*, there may be fancy in our use of the symbols, but the characteristics thus symbolized are realities.

How wonderful the mere outline of this book! The stage a solitary island—

"Placed far amid the melancholy main,"

the sole spectator, a gray-haired Apostle of Jesus, who once lay on His breast, but is now alone in the world; the time, the Lord's-day, acquiring a deeper sacredness from the surrounding solitude and silence of nature; the appearance of the Universal Bishop, gold-girt, with head and hairs white as snow, flaming eyes, feet like burning brass, voice as the sound of many waters, the seven stars in His right hand, and walking through the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; His charges to His churches so simple, affectionate and awful; the opening of a door in heaven; the throne, rainbow-surrounded, fringed by the seven lamps, and seeing its shadow in the sea of glass, mingled with fire; the Lion of the tribe of Judah opening the seals; the coming forth of the giant steeds—one white as the milky banner of the Cross, another red as blood—a third black, and with a rider having a pair of balances in his hand—a fourth pale, and mounted by death; the cry of the souls under the altar; the opening of the sixth seal; the angels standing on the four corners of the earth, and blowing their blasts over a silent world; the sealing of the tribes; the great multitude standing before the Lamb; the volcano cast like a spark into the sea; the opening of the bottomless pit;

the emergence of those fearful hybrids of hell—the scorpion locusts, with Apollyon as their king; the unwritten words of the seven thunders; the prophesying, and death, and resurrection of the two witnesses; the woman clothed with the sun; that other woman, drunk and drenched in holy blood; the uprising of the twin beasts of crowned blasphemy; the Lamb and His company on the Mount Zion; the angel flying through the midst of heaven, with the Gospel in his mouth; the man on the white cloud, with the gold crown on his head, and the sharp sickle in his hand; the reaping of the harvest of the earth; the vintage of blood; the coming forth from the *smoke of the glory of* God—of the seven angels, with the seven last plagues, clothed with linen, girded with virgin gold, and holding, with hands unharmed and untrembling, the vials full of the wrath of God—one for the earth—one for the sea—one for the fountains of waters—one for the sun, to feed his old flame into ten-fold fierceness—one for the seat of the beast—one for the Euphrates—and one for the fire-tormented and earthquake-listening air; the fall of the great city Babylon; the preparations for the battle of Armageddon; the advent of the Captain of the holy host; the battle; the rout of the beast, and the false prophet driven back upon the lake of fire; the binding of Satan; the reign of Christ and his saints; the final assault of the enemy, Gog and Magog, upon the camp and the holy city; their discomfiture; the uprising behind it, of the great white throne; and the ultimate and everlasting "bridal of the earth and sky"—such are the main constituents of this prodigious and unearthly poem, the Apocalypse, or Revelation of Jesus Christ.

But what *saith* this Scripture? of what is this the ciphered story. "Who shall open this book, and loose the seals thereof?" We seem to see ten thousand attenuated forms, and pale and eager countenances hanging over, and beseeching its obstinate oracle. We remember the circle of books which have, in the course of ages, slowly gathered around it, like

planets around the sun, in vain, for how can planets add to the clearness of their central luminary? We remember the fact, that many strong spirits, such as Calvin and Luther, have shrunk from the task of its explication, and that Robert Hall is reported to have said, when asked to undertake it, "Do you wish me in my grave?" We remember that the explanations hitherto given constitute a very chaos of contradictions, and remind us of the

> "Eternal anarchy, amid the noise
> Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
> For *hot, cold, moist* and *dry*, four champions fierce,
> Strive here for mast'ry, and to battle bring
> Their embryon atoms; they around the flag
> Of each his faction in their several clans,
> *Light arm'd*, or *heavy, sharp, smooth, swift* or *slow*,
> Swarm populous."

So that the question still recurs, "Who shall open the book and loose the seals thereof?"

Sin, the sorceress, kept the key of hell. Perhaps to Time, the truth-teller, has been intrusted the key of this chaos; or, perhaps some angel genius, mightier still than Mede, or Elliott, or Croly, may yet be seen speeding, "with a key in his hand," to open this surpassing problem, and with "a great chain," to bind its conflicting interpreters. Our notion rather is, that the full solution is reserved for the second coming of Christ; that He alone possesses the key to its mystery, who holds, also, the keys of Hades and of death; and that over this hitherto inscrutable volume, as over so many others, the song shall be sung, "Thou, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof."

We cannot close the Apocalypse, without wondering at its singular history. An island dream, despised at first by many, as we would have despised that of a seer of Mull or Benbecula, admitted with difficulty into the canon, has foretold and outlived dynasties—made popes tremble and toss upon their midnight beds—made conquerors pale, as they saw, or

thought they saw, their own achievements traced along its mysterious page, and their own bloody seas anticipated—fired the muse of the proudest poets, and the pencil of the most gifted artists—and drawn, as students and admirers, around its cloudy center, the doctors, and theologians, and philosophers of half the world. And, most wonderful of all, *it has kept its secret*—it has baffled all inquirers, and continues "shrouded and folded up," like a ghost in its own formless shades, ranking thus, *either* with the dreams of mere madness, and forming a silent but tremendous satire on a world of fools, who have consented to believe and to examine it; *or*, as we believe, with those grand enigmas of Nature, Providence and Faith, which can only be stated, and can only be solved, by God Himself.

GOD IS LOVE.

"I say to thee, do thou repeat
To the first man thou mayest meet,
In lane, highway or open street,

"That he, and we, and all men move
Under a canopy of Love,
As broad as the blue sky above;

"That doubt and trouble, fear and pain,
And anguish, all are sorrows vain;
That death itself shall not remain;

"That weary deserts we may tread,
A dreary labyrinth may thread,
Through dark ways underground be led;

"Yet if we will our Guide obey,
The dreariest path, the darkest way,
Shall issue out in heavenly day.

"And we, on divers shores now cast,
Shall meet, our perilous voyage past,
All in our Father's home at last.

"And ere thou leave him, say thou this,
Yet one word more: They only miss
The winning of the final bliss

"Who will not count it true that Love,
Blessing, not cursing, rules above,
And that in it we live and move;

"And one thing further make him know,
That to believe these things are so,
This firm faith never to forego—

"Despite of all which seems at strife
With blessing, and with curses rife—
That this *is* blessing, this *is* life."

TRENCH.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

ISLE OF PATMOS.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

INTRODUCTION.—The Mediterranean—Asia Minor—Genial Winters—Reviving Showers—Beautiful Scenery—Vegetable Kingdom—Animals—Salt Lakes—Mountain System—The Apocalypse—Patmos—What is Meant by Asia—The Number Seven—The Seven Churches.

BEAUTIFUL is all this wide world of ours, which the infinite goodness of God has made for the delight and edification of man; but there is not, perhaps, a lovelier region than the Asiatic coast of the Mediterranean Sea. That sea is, in itself, singularly full of charm and entertainment for the lover of nature as for the student of history. Its blue surface is studded with gem-like islands of all dimensions, from the kingdom of Sicily to the barren volcanic rock; most of them enriched with the choicest gifts of fertility, blooming with flower and leaf, and radiant with an almost eternal sunshine. Few violent tempests ever wrinkle its "azure brow"; its tides flow so gently as to be almost imperceptible; and such is its general aspect of tranquillity that it might more fitly be described as a vast inland lake.

Its smiling waters, moreover, wash the shores of historic lands—of lands in the old time the seat of mighty empires—Rome and Greece, Egypt and Carthage; and it has ever been the principal highway of the world's commerce, from that remote antiquity when the adventurous Phenicians first furrowed it with the keels of their many-oared galleys, to the present day, when it is the great route to the East. In the belief of the ancients it occupied the very center of the globe; and hence they named it the Mid-Earth, or Mediterranean. It was the "mighty ocean," the "many-sounding sea," the "raging deep" of their poets; the realm of strange monsters and sea-gods, Tritons and Nereides; and regarded both by

landsman and mariner with an awe and terror which to us moderns seem almost incomprehensible.

It is toward the sunrise that it laves the shores of Asia Minor or Lesser Asia; shores which present a curiously broken and irregular outline, and throughout almost their whole extent are bordered with a fringe of islands, which seem at some distant period to have formed part of the mainland. On the present occasion we have to concern ourselves with only a small portion of Asia Minor—the *littoral*, or country skirting the Mediterranean, from the river Caicus to the river Mendere; for the most part a narrow strip of land, bounded by lofty mountain ranges, and diversified by their projecting spurs, but occasionally expanding into broad smiling plains, and deepening into exuberantly fertile valleys. While the distant peaks glitter with a permanent crown of ice and snow, around their base flourishes a belt of smiling garden-ground and "purple orchards"; higher up the mountain-side spreads a dark-green girdle of forests; from many a rocky recess trickles the tiny thread of a crystal stream; and on the projecting crags are perched the stone walls of silent convents, or the scattered huts of drowsy villages. Offsets from these mountains strike across the plain to the very margin of the sea, where they terminate in bold, romantic precipices, bleached by incessant surf and spray.

The valleys and meads of Asia Minor are full of rich vegetable mould, particularly the plain of Smyrna, which is brilliantly verdant, and watered by numerous streams, that contribute to its freshness and abundance. Here the winter is so genial that the orange, the banana, and other tender trees, flourish in the open air, and are radiant with fruit and flowers even while the distant mountains whiten the sky with their thick mantles of snow. During the very hot months—that is, from the beginning of May to the close of August—no rain falls, and the air is then felt to be painfully oppressive by the European, except near the coast, where the high tem-

perature is relieved by the sea-breezes. During this long interval the morning breaks, and the noon glows, and the day declines with a sky almost wholly free from clouds, or, at least, only relieved all over its monotonous azure by a few feathery streaks of snowy luster. The thin grass and the aromatic shrubs which then cover the face of the land wither and die away, blighted by the fierce, incessant sunshine. Men go to and fro weary and exhausted, longing for "a shadow in the daytime from the heat," for "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." How pleasantly upon the ear falls the murmur of a running stream; how grateful to the eye is the shade of the far-sweeping cedar! We look toward the scattered vineyards with feelings of peculiar delight; with wistful gaze we survey the far-off fields of green millet watered by the husbandman's care, or the occasional groves of fig-trees, olives, and pomegranates.

Day by day the land grows drier, more parched, more barren. It seems as if the soil would be utterly burned up and desolated, when lo! in the south arises a cloud not bigger than a man's hand, which gradually enlarges—is swollen by other clouds—and at length, toward the middle of September, descends upon the thirsty earth in abundant showers. Then all nature seems to undergo a sudden transformation! The change which takes place is, in truth, almost miraculous. From the highlands come rushing down a thousand living waters, which, uniting in their onward course, swell into various streams of considerable force and volume, replenishing the exhausted rivers, and spreading all around them a genial beauty. Swiftly glides over the gladdened earth a mantle of fresh bright verdure; by the wayside or in the clefts of the rocks, a gay sweet world of verbenas, ranunculuses, and other flowers, springs into living vigor; light emerald leaflets may be seen to bud on the dark boughs of the laurel and the myrtle; tall thistles, with grand clusters of purple blossoms, embellish every crevice and cranny; the junipers deck themselves

with rare ornaments of white and yellow flowers, and the air breathes the delicate fragrance of the jasmine and the hawthorn. It is at this delightful season of the year that the poet's words may be justly applied to the scenes we have attempted to describe. It is then that

> "Mildly dimpling, Ocean's cheek
> Reflects the tint of many a peak
> Caught by the laughing tides that lave
> This Eden of the western wave!
> And if at times a transient breeze
> Break the blue crystal of the seas,
> Or sweep one blossom from the trees,
> How welcome is each gentle air
> That wakes and wafts the odors there!"

There is something in the scenery of this part of Asia Minor something in the habits of the people and in every object one meets, that distinguishes them from all other regions of the earth. The sun is brighter and the air more balsamic than even in Italy or Sicily—the mountains are far more sublime —the plains generally vaster—the rivers more picturesque—the forests wear a more religious gloom—the wild flowers are more numerous, are more dazzling in color, of a richer fragrance and a larger growth. The solitude is more intense. The voice of the Moslem priest (the Muezzin) from the arrowy minaret, touches the ear and the heart more tenderly, more exquisitely even than the sound of the "Ave Maria" at twilight in the villages of Spain, or our own sweet evening-bells as they chime over the quiet plain and echo through the silent vale. And if at that "pensive tide" the wayfarer reach a remote town or a hamlet in the waste, the sight of women drawing water at the fountains, or sitting down by the mouths of the wells that are always found at the entrance of every town and village, realizes to his mind the scenes of Scripture, and recalls the days when our blessed Saviour, then Himself a weary wayfarer and athirst, took His seat by the side of Jacob's Well, near the city of Sychar, and spoke to the wo-

dering Samaritan woman of that "well of water springing up into everlasting life," of which those who have once drunk "shall never thirst."

The vegetation of the Mediterranean coast of Asia Minor resembles that of Syria and southern Greece. Its river banks and its delightful valleys are clothed with the olive and the

ASIA.

vine, the myrtle and the laurel, the terebinth or turpentine tree, the mastic and the tamarind. Here, too, flourishes almost every variety of fruit tree; the walnut, the apricot, the plum, and the cherry growing in complete forests. The cherry derives its name from the town of Cerasus, in whose neighborhood it grows abundantly. The majestic plane is also

a native of Asia Minor; the oak, which produces the gall-nuts used by dyers, is found everywhere; and the mountain-sides are heavy with the dense shadows of the savin, the juniper, and the cypress.

Little need be said of the animal kingdom as it exists in Asia Minor. The goats of Angora are celebrated for the length and fineness of their hair, which is generally of a milk-white color, and covers the whole body in long pendent spiral ringlets. They are short-legged, with black, spreading, and curiously twisted horns. The same district produces breeds of sheep, cats and rabbits, also distinguished for the peculiar silkiness of their hair.

The horses, which are swift and strong, are supposed to have been introduced from Cappadocia. Sometimes the Syrian antelope ranges beyond Mount Taurus, and meets the ibex descending from the rocky heights of Caucasus. Well for them if they do not fall victims to the sudden attacks of the fierce enemies which still lurk in the mountainous districts—the wolf, the bear, the jackal and the hyena.

The rivers of Asia Minor are numerous; most of them are famous in song, legend, or history; but all are of inconsiderable volume. The largest flow into the Black Sea.

Asia Minor contains a great many lakes which are destitute of all apparent outlets, and whose waters are more or less impregnated with salt. The largest is Lake Tazla, about thirty miles long, which shines in the distance like a vast sheet of silver, owing to the saline crystals which fringe its shores and incrust its surface.

The mountain system is connected with that of Armenia, and consists of two chains, one of which, stretching boldly along the northern coast, is united with the other, to the west of the Euphrates, by a third chain, the Argis Dagh, whose summits are crowned with diadems of eternal snow; and of the grand southern range of Mount Taurus, which extends its numerous arms to the very shore of the Mediterranean.

Such, then, are the general characters of Asia Minor—a country which, in the past history of the human race, has played no unimportant part. That portion of it which here concerns us is included in the Turkish province of Anatolia, and derives a special interest from its association with the Seven Cities where Christian Churches were planted by the Apostles of our Lord; the Seven Cities favored with the ministrations of the Evangelist John; the Seven Cities, to whose communities of believers was addressed the Apocalyptic Epistle—the Book of Revelation.

Before we enter upon a consideration of the rise and fall and present condition of those interesting places, it seems desirable, however, to say something in reference to the remarkable epistle which was communicated to them, nearly eighteen hundred years ago, as a solemn message "from Him which is, and which was and which is to come, and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne."

ALMOND TREE.

There can be little doubt that it was written by the disciple whom Jesus loved—John the Evangelist; and such is the direct testimony of the Fathers of the Christian Church. The evidence, says Dean Alford, is of the highest and most satisfactory kind; it was unanimous in very early times. It came, as he observes, from those who had known and heard St. John himself; it only began to be discredited at a later period by theologians who entertained doctrinal objections to the book. The doubt was taken up by critics, who looked upon the language as differing in style and character from that of St. John's Gospel; but no real, substantial counter-claimant was ever produced, and the spirit which

breathes in every line is that of the tender-souled and earnestly-affectionate Apostle.

The next consideration is—When and where was it written?

On the latter point we have the testimony of St. John himself, who distinctly declares that he was favored with the apocalyptic visions during his sojourn in Patmos.

Patmos is a small rugged island off the south-western coast of Asia Minor—one of a numerous group called the Sporades. It is a mass of barren rock, about fifteen or sixteen miles in circuit, with a bold, precipitous coast, broken up by headlands and bays. In the center it rises up in a lofty mountain, crowned by the little town of Patmos, with, midway, a natural grotto, which tradition reports to have been the scene of St. John's apocalyptic visions.

It is said that the Apostle was banished here during the persecution of the Christians which took place in the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian—that is, about 95 or 96 A D.

The Book of Revelation opens with these words: "John to the Seven Churches which are in Asia." By the expression "in Asia," however, we are not to understand the great Eastern continent now designated by that name, of which a very considerable area was not even known to the ancient world in the time of John; nor even that more limited region which since the fourth century has been known as Asia Minor, or Lesser Asia; but simply the narrow strip of land lying on the western coast, of which we have already spoken. This had originally been settled by Greek colonists, and their descendants exhibited a refinement and a mental cultivation of truly Greek character, such as no other Asiatic people ever attained.

In this narrow but favored territory many Christian Churches were planted by Christ's Apostles at an early period after His ascension. St. John's epistle, as inspired by "Him who was, and is and is to come," was addressed only to *seven*

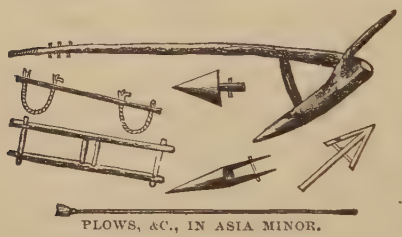
of these. Surely for this limitation—for this choice of the number "seven"—some special reason existed.

Well, in the first place, we may call the reader's attention to the curious repetition of *sevens* which occurs in the Apocalypse. For instance we meet with the seven Spirits (ch. i. 4); the seven candlesticks (ch. i. 12); the seven stars (ch. i. 16); the seven lamps of fire (ch. iv. 5); the seven seals (ch. v. 1); the seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb (ch. v. 6); the seven heavenly angels and the seven trumpets (ch. viii. 2); the seven thunders (ch. x. 3): the seven heads of the dragon, and the seven crowns upon those heads (ch. xii. 3); the same of the beast rising out of the sea (ch. xiii. 1); the seven last plagues (ch. xv. 1); the seven vials (ch. xv. 7); the seven mountains (ch. xvii. 9); and the seven kings (ch. xvii. 10). In the same manner we find this number running through the whole of Scripture, from first to last, so as to impress our minds with a sense of its mystic value and symbolic purport, though we are unable to say, with absolute certainty, why God has invested it with so much sacredness.

We may venture to regard it, however, as the covenant number—the sign and signature of God's covenant relation to man, and especially to that portion of mankind attached to Him by the ties of love and duty—the Christian Church.

"The evidences of this," says Archbishop Trench, "reach back to the very beginning. We meet them first in the hallowing of the *seventh* day, in pledge and token of the covenant of God with man (Gen. ii. 3), as indeed in the very binding up of seven in the very word Sabbath. . . . . Nor should it be left unnoticed that the word seven is again bound up in the Hebrew word signifying an oath, or a covenant confirmed with an oath. Seven is the number of sacrifice, by aid of which the covenant, once established, is continually maintained in its first vigor and strength, and the relations between God and man, which sin is evermore disturbing and threatening to bring to an end, are restored (2 Chron. xxix.

21; Job xlii. 8; compare Num. xxiii. 1, 14, 29). It is the number of purification and consecration, as the fruits of the sacrifice (Lev. iv. 6, 17; viii. 11, 33; xiv. 7, 51; xvi 14, 19; Num. xix. 12, 19); and of forgiveness (Matt. xviii. 21, 22; Luke xvii. 4). Then, again, seven is the number of every grace and benefit bestowed upon Israel, which is thus marked as flowing out of the covenant, and a consequence of it. The priests compass Jericho seven days, and on the seventh day seven times, that all Israel may know the city is given into their hands by their God, and that its conquest is a direct and immediate result of their covenant relation to him (Joshua vi. 4, 15, 16.) Naaman is to dip in Jordan seven times, that he may acknowledge the God of Israel the author of his cure (2 Kings v. 10). It is the number of reward to those that are faithful in the covenant (Deut. xxviii. 7; 1 Sam. ii. 5); of punishment to those who are froward in the covenant (Lev. xxvi. 21, 24, 28); or to those who injure the people in it. . . . . All the priests, as must be obvious to every one, are ordered by seven, or else by seven multiplied into seven (7 × 7), and thus made intenser still. Thus it is, not to recur again to Sabbath, the mother of all feasts, with the Passover, (Exod. xii. 15, 16), the Feast of Weeks (Deut. xvi. 9), of Tabernacles (Deut. xvi. 13, 15), the Sabbath-year (Lev. xxv. 2–4; Deut. xv. 1), and the Jubilee (Lev. xxv. 8, 9)."



PLOWS, &C., IN ASIA MINOR.

As we have hinted, we cannot say with absolute certainty why the number seven has been invested with such evident sacredness, and in all such speculations it is well for us to bear in mind the warning of witty Thomas Fuller, that, in respect to the significance of number, "fancy is never at a loss, like a beggar never out of his way, but hath some

haunts where to repose itself. But such as, in expounding of Scripture, reap more than God did sow there, never eat what they reap thence, because such grainless husks, when seriously threshed out, vanish all into chaff." Yet we may point out the fact that the number seven results from the combination of what we may call the *divine* and *human* numbers, *three* and *four*; "three" being the special signature of God, as in the ever-blessed Trinity; and "four," of the world, as in the four winds, the four elements, the four seasons, and the four corners of the earth. (Isa. xi. 12.)

We see, therefore, abundant reason why the Apocalyptic Epistle should be addressed to *seven* churches; and we may infer as the number seven is universal in its application, so do the Seven Churches represent as a whole the Universal Church. They embody the different characters which go to make up that Church, and are dependent one upon another for fullness of meaning; showing us, as a whole, "the great and leading aspects, moral and spiritual, which churches, gathered out from the world in the name of Christ, will assume."

Thus, then, we meet, as we read the second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation, with (to adopt the words of Archbishop Trench) a church face to face with danger and death (Smyrna); and a church at ease, declining into sinful lethargy (Sardis); a church with abundant means and loud profession, yet doing little or nothing for the furtherance of the truth (Laodicea); and a church with little strength and little power, yet accomplishing a mighty work for Christ (Philadelphia); a church intolerant of error in doctrine, yet possessing too little of that love toward its Lord for which nothing else is a substitute (Ephesus); and, as opposed to this, a church not careful or zealous, as it ought to be, for doctrinal purity, but diligent in the work and ministry of love (Thyatira). Or, if we look at the same churches from another point of view, we see a church in hot conflict with

heathenism — the sinful freedom of the flesh (Ephesus); and a church, or churches, battling against Jewish superstition — the sinful bondage of the soul (Pergamos and Philadelphia); or, considering the indolence of man a still more perilous case, churches with no lively forms of opposition to the truth agitating their depths, and while re-invigorating their energies, and inspiring them to defend the endangered truth, causing them, by that very act, to know and love it better (Sardis and Laodicea).

EPHESUS.

Ruins of the City—Magnificence of Ancient Ephesus—Temple of Diana—Sculptures of Praxiteles—Painting of Alexander by Apelles—Visit of St. Paul—The Artisans raise a Tumult—Paul Departs—The Ministrations of St. John—Ephesus Captured by the Turks—Epistle to this Church—The Stadium—The Theater—Prison of St. Paul—Burning of the Temple—To Rebuild it the Ladies give their Jewelry—Laid waste by the Goths.

OUR attention will now be directed to the historical and topographical associations of the Seven Churches, and first to that of Ephesus, which claims as its peculiar honor to have been founded by Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who ministered to its converts in the years 55 and 56, and addressed to them one of his most remarkable epistles.

What would have been the astonishment and grief of the "beloved apostle" and Timothy if they could have foreseen that a time would come when there would be in Ephesus neither angel, nor church, nor city—when the great city would become "heaps, a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness; a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby." Once it had Christian temples, almost rivaling the Pagan in splendor, wherein the image that fell from Jupiter lay prostrate before the Cross; and as many tongues, moved by the Holy Ghost, made public avowal that "Great is the Lord Jesus!" Once it had as the "angel of the church," Timothy, the disciple of St. John; and tradition reports that it was honored with the last days of both these great men, and of the mother of our Lord.

Some centuries passed on, and the altars of Jesus were thrown down to make way for the delusions of Mohammed, the Cross is removed from the dome of the church, and the Crescent glitters in its stead.

A few years more, and all may be silence in the mosque and the church. A few unintelligible heaps of stones, with some mud cottages, untenanted, are all the remains of the great city of the Ephesians. The busy hum of a mighty population is silent in death. "Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war are fallen." Even the sea has retired from the scene of desolation, and a pestilential morass, covered with mud and

SITE OF EPHESUS.

rushes, has succeeded to the waters which brought up the ships laden with merchandise from every country.

Ancient Ephesus, which excelled even Smyrna in wealth and magnificence, was situated near the mouth of the river Cayster, embosomed in groves and gardens, and sheltered by the shadows of encircling mountains. Attracted by the loveliness of the spot, the Ionians, upward of one thousand years before the birth of our Lord, founded a city there, which grew with a marvelous growth. It was speedily celebrated throughout Asia for its palaces, its marts, and its temples, and especially for the splendid edifice raised in honor of Diana, or Artemis, the goddess of the moon. The history of this temple was singular; for no less than seven times

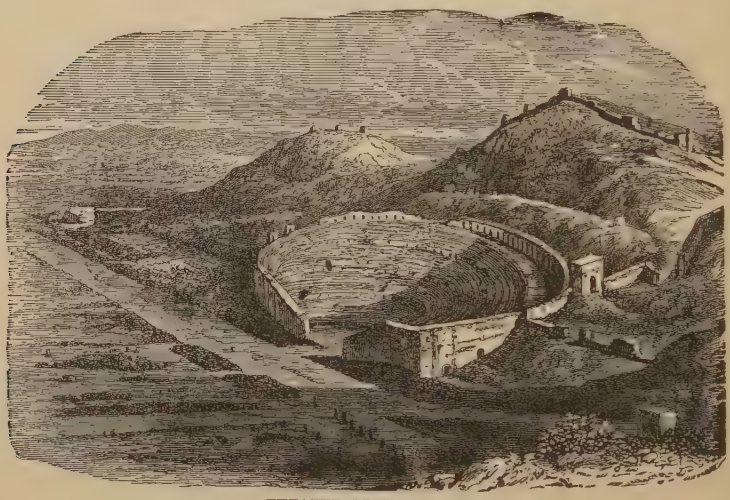
was it destroyed, and seven times rebuilt with increased splendor. In the third century before Christ, it was restored on a scale of surprising magnificence. It measured 425 feet in length, by 220 feet in breadth. Of the marble columns which adorned it, and were each 60 feet in height, one hundred and twenty-seven were donations from kings and princes. Thirty-six were cunningly carved by the most skillful workmen. The folding-doors were of cypress-wood, which had been treasured up for four generations, and highly polished; the ceiling was of cedar; and the steps which led up to the roof were wrought from the giant stem of a single vine. The altar was enriched with the masterly sculptures of Praxiteles, one of the greatest of the great Greek artists; and its ornaments in gold and silver excited the wonder of all beholders. Among the offerings was a picture by the famous painter Apelles, representing Alexander the Great armed with the thunder-bolt, and worth, it was said, no less than $19,000. Very proud were the heathen of this gorgeous edifice, and very confident that it would endure for ages. It was, however, but short-lived. It was first plundered by the Roman Emperor Nero, who carried off an immense booty in gold and silver; and afterward by the Goths, who reduced it to a mass of ruins.

Here were practiced the superstitious and deceitful arts of magic, by a succession of priests called *Megabyzae*, trained to cheat and delude the populace. A vast concourse of strangers, accordingly, was ever sweeping toward a city presenting such remarkable attractions to the ignorant and credulous, and Ephesus continued to increase in wealth as in luxury. Her harbor was thronged with ships; gay crowds flashed through her splendid streets; and everywhere went up the jubilant cry of "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

It was on his third famous journey that St. Paul first visited this licentious but magnificent city, which was then the mercantile capital of Asia Minor (Acts xvii. 19–21). On a

second visit, he found there a prosperous colony of Jews, and among them some who had heard the teaching of John the Baptist or his disciples, and a few who had even received his baptism. The latter willingly listened to Paul's discourses; to the number of twelve, they "received the Holy Ghost"; others afterward embraced the "glad tidings"; and taking possession of a school belonging to a person named Tyrannus, they set up a Christian church—a distinct and independent place of Divine worship.

Paul continued to reside in Ephesus for two years, and the



THEATER OF EPHESUS.

progress of Christianity during this period was greatly accelerated by the wonderful cures he effected (Acts xix. 11, 12). The necromancers and the Jewish priests, waxing jealous of his extraordinary success, endeavored to counteract it by resorting to magical practices. They pretended to exorcise evil spirits. But one of the unhappy victims on whom they tried their experiments turned against them, assaulted them with considerable violence, and drove them naked and wounded out of his house (Acts xix. 16).

This extraordinary event, says Dean Milman, was not only fatal to the pretensions of the Jewish exorcists, but at once seemed to put to shame all who believed and all who practiced magical arts, and the manufacturers of spells and talismans. Multitudes eagerly came forward and gave up to the flames their charms, their amulets, their images of Diana, and their magical books, in such quantities, that their total value was computed at 50,000 pieces of silver, or about $7,000 of our money (Acts xix. 17–19).

The established religion was necessarily shaken in repute by these events, and many of the craftsmen, who depended upon it for their subsistence, grew alarmed at the rapid increase of Christianity. The Temple of Ephesus, as we have said, was regarded as one of the wonders of the world, and constantly visited by strangers, who lavished liberal offerings at its altar. A common article of trade was a model or shrine of silver, representing this famous structure, which was either preserved as a memorial, or supposed to be endowed with some rare talismanic power. The sale of these works largely fell off, and the artisans, instigated by a certain Demetrius, raised a violent popular tumult, and caused it to be spread abroad among the Greeks that the worship of Diana was in danger. Then was there a hurrying to and fro; men with inflamed faces gathered at the corners of the streets; weapons were drawn; from mouth to mouth passed the signal, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians"; and the enraged populace eddied and swayed toward the public theater, dragging with them two of Paul's companions. The Apostle himself would fain have descended into their midst, and boldly confronted them, but was restrained by the prudence of his friends (Acts xix. 30); and after the tumult was ended, seems to have been advised to leave the excited city, and continue his travels in Macedonia and Greece.

After Paul's departure, the Christian Church continued for awhile to thrive, and at one time enjoyed the high honor of

receiving the ministrations of St. John. There is a tradition —so pleasing we could wish it to be better founded—that when he grew too feeble from age to utter any long discourse, his failing voice dwelt on a brief exhortation to mutual charity. His whole sermon was comprised in this memorable injunction, "Little children, love one another"; and when his audience complained of what they thought a wearisome repetition, he declared that in those golden words was contained a truth sufficient for their meditation.

ACROPOLIS.

The banishment of the Apostle to the rocky solitudes of Patmos may probably have originated in a local disturbance at Ephesus.

After this event the Church would seem in some measure to have declined from the high standard of its early faith, and the venerable Apostle, inspired by his Divine Master, addressed its "angel," or minister, in words breathing the most earnest devotion:

"I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and

how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." (Rev. ii. 2–5).

In the eleventh century Ephesus was captured and razed to the ground by the Turks, and its present condition is a strange and startling contrast to its ancient pride of place. The sea has receded from its original margin; what was once a busy harbor is now a dreary and desolate marsh; and the former extent of the city can only be traced by a solitary watch-tower, and some fragments of masonry on the grassy hill. Part of its site is now a plowed field. When night descends, the mournful cry of the jackal resounds where formerly arose the hum of men, and the night-hawk and the owl haunt the scanty memorials of departed greatness. Of its Temple of Diana not a trace is extant. There remain, indeed, considerable ruins of the theater, which was connected with so memorable an event in Paul's history. A miserable Turkish village, called Aiasaluk, is also situated some distance inland; and these are all the signs the stranger can discover of the once splendid seat of pagan worship.

The Ephesians themselves are now, as a traveler tells us, a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, despondence, and insensibility—the representatives of an illustrious people, dwelling among the ruins of their former greatness. Some have raised their huts on the foundations of once glorious edifices; some lurk beneath in the vaults of the Stadium (an amphitheater), 687 feet in length; and some hide their poverty in the sepulchers which received the ashes of their prosperous ancestors. "We employed a couple of them."

says Dr. Chandler, "to pile stones, to serve instead of a ladder, at the arch of the Stadium, and to clear a pedestal of a portico of the theater from rubbish. We had occasion for another to dig at the Corinthian temple, and sending to the Stadium, the whole tribe, ten or twelve, followed, one playing all the way before them on a rude lyre, and at times striking the sounding-board with the fingers of his left hand, in concert with the strings. One of them had on a pair of sandals of goat-skin, laced with thongs, and not uncommon. After gratifying their curiosity, they returned back as they came, with their musician in front. Such are the present citizens of Ephesus; and such is the condition to which that renowned city has been gradually reduced. Its streets are obscured and overgrown. A herd of goats was driven to it for shelter from the sun at noon, and a noisy flight of crows from the quarries seemed to insult its silence."

It is "a solemn and most forlorn spot"; and in the shadows of the deep night, when the mournful cry of the jackal resounds from the mountain, and the night-hawk and shriek-owl hover among the ruins, the scene impresses the traveler with a painful emotion, until he remembers that, transitory as are the pleasures and glories of this present world, the happiness and beauty and joy of the world to come will be, like the power and wisdom of God, eternal!

As we think of the past and present condition of this seat of primitive Christianity our minds are naturally occupied with the epistle addressed to the angel of this church. It teaches us that it is possible to exhibit some brilliant parts of the Christian character, and to be distinguished for labor, perseverance, and for other very excellent qualities, and yet to have a fatal malady commencing its attacks upon us which threatens the very ruin of all our hopes.—*Nevertheless I have somewhat against* thee, *because thou hast left thy first* love! (Rev. ii. 4.) How few are there, who do not feel the charge too applicable to themselves! But unless we call to *remem-*

brance the station from whence we are fallen, and *repent and do the first works,* that intimation of the Divine displeasure which is here given will not fail to be accomplished—"I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." (Rev. ii. 5.) The neglect of such an admonition, in the case of an individual, would involve consequences analogous to those which are more peculiarly threatened against a whole community; but when an entire body of Christians, when a Christian church becomes guilty of this sin, the indignation of God is exhibited in the face of the world. At Ephesus, we find at present, only one individual who bears the name of Christ! And where, in the whole region, do we discover any semblance of primitive Christianity? The country once favored with the presence of St. Paul, of Timothy, and St. John, is now in the situation of those lands of which it is said, *Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people* (Isa. lx. 2.); *he,* then, *that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.* (Rev. ii. 17.)

The city originally stood on the slope of Corissus; but gradually it descended into the plain, in the direction of the Temple of Diana. The Alexandrian age produced a marked alteration in Ephesus, as in most of the great towns of the East; and Lysimachus extended the city over the summit of Prion, as well as the heights of Corissus. The Roman age saw, doubtless, a still further increase both of the size and magnificence of the place. To attempt to reconstruct it from the materials which remain, would be a difficult task—far more difficult than in the case of Athens or even Antioch; but some of the more interesting sites are easily identified. Those who walk over the desolate site of the Asiatic metropolis, see piles of ruined edifices on the rocky sides and among the thickets of Mount Prion; they look out from its summit over the confused morass which was once the harbor, where Aquila and Priscilla landed; and they visit in its deep recesses the dripping marble quarries, where the marks of

the tools are visible still. On the outer edge of the same hill they trace the enclosure of the Stadium, which may have suggested to St. Paul many of those images with which he enforces Christian duty, in the first letter written from Ephesus to Corinth. Farther on, and near Corissus, the remains of the vast theater (the outline of the enclosure is still distinct, though the marble seats are removed) show the place where the multitude, roused by Demetrius, shouted out for two hours, in honor of Diana. Below is the Agora, through which the mob rushed up to the well-known place of meeting. And in the valley between Prion and Corissus is one of the gymnasia, where the athletes were trained for transient honors and a perishable garland. Surrounding and crowning the scene, are the long Hellenic walls of Lysimachus, following the ridge of Corissus. On a spur of the hill, they descend to an ancient tower, which is still called the Prison of St. Paul. The name is, doubtless, legendary; but St. Paul may have stood here, and looked over the city and the plain, and seen the Cayster winding toward him from the base of the precipice of Gallesus. Within his view was another eminence, detached from the city of that day, but which became the Mohammedan town when ancient Ephesus was destroyed, and nevertheless preserves in its name a record of another apostle the "disciple" St. John.

The Temple of Diana glittered in brilliant beauty at the head of the harbor, and was reckoned by the ancients as one of the wonders of the world. The sun, it was said, saw nothing in its course more magnificent than Diana's temple. Its honor dated from a remote antiquity. Leaving out of consideration the earliest temple, which was contemporaneous with the Athenian colony under Androclus, or even yet more ancient, we find the great edifice, which was anterior to the Macedonian period, begun and continued in the midst of the attention and admiration both of Greeks and Asiatics. The foundations were carefully laid, with immense substructions,

in the marshy ground. Architects of the highest distinction were employed. The quarries of Mount Prion supplied the marble. All the Greek cities of Asia contributed to the structure; and Crœsus, the king of Lydia, himself lent his aid. The work thus begun before the Persian war, was slowly continued even through the Peloponnesian war, and its dedication was celebrated by a poet contemporary with Euripides But the building, which had been thus rising through the space of many years, was not destined to remain long in the beauty of its perfection. The fanatic Herostratus set fire to it on the same night in which Alexander was born. This is one of the coincidences of history, on which the ancient world was fond of dwelling; and it enables us, with more distinctness, to pursue the annals of "Diana of the Ephesians." The temple was rebuilt with new and more sumptuous magnificence. The ladies of Ephesus contributed their jewelry to the expense of the restoration. The national pride in the sanctuary was so great, that, when Alexander offered the spoils of his Eastern campaign if he might inscribe his name on the building, the honor was declined. The Ephesians never ceased to embellish the shrine of their goddess, continually adding new decorations and subsidiary buildings, with statues and pictures by the most famous artists. This was the temple that kindled the enthusiasm of St. Paul's opponents (Acts xix.), and was still the rallying-point of heathenism in the days of St. John and Polycarp. In the second century, we read, it was united to the city by a long colonnade. But soon afterward it was plundered and laid waste by the Goths, who came from beyond the Danube in the reign of Gallienus. It sunk entirely into decay in the age when Christianity was overspreading the empire; and its remains are to be sought for in mediæval buildings, in the columns of green jasper which support the dome of St. Sophia, or even in the naves of Italian cathedrals.

In closing this brief account of the first of the seven churches, we may remind our readers that the same intimate knowledge which our Lord possessed of the Ephesian church He now possesses in regard to each one of us. While warning us against the dangerous consequences of our sins, He yet knows and approves our virtues. There is not one advancing effort which we have made in the way of holiness, not a sinful gratification which we have foregone, not an evil habit, or person, or thing, from which we have separated, or a labor of love which we have performed for His name's sake, of which He does not as distinctly say to us as in former times to the church of Ephesus, "I know it, and know it with approbation," for this is the meaning of the Scripture phrase. The gracious Redeemer knows our attempts at holy living as the sincere though feeble efforts of children anxious to manifest their love, and gratitude, and obedience to an indulgent father; and He delights in every work of charity or kindness, as He once did in the offering of the woman in Bethany which rejoiced His heart and received His commendation, because having been forgiven much she loved much, and it could with justice be said of her, "She hath done what she could." Warned, therefore, by the message to this ancient church, let us also be encouraged to persevere in good works, knowing that our "labor shall not be in vain in the Lord," and that thus we shall escape the condemnation which came upon the earlier disciples of Christ.

SMYRNA.

Still a large City—Mingling of Many Nations—Caravan Bridge—Large Commerce—Antiquity of the City—"The Crown of Life"—Polycarp—His Arrest—A Voice from Heaven—The Trial—Prayer of the Patriarch—Bound to the Stake—His Death—The Plague—Women of Smyrna—The Modern City—The Bay—The Old Fortress—The Mountains—Martyrdom of a Greek Christian.

ONE of the fairest cities of Asia Minor, and second in importance of the Seven Churches, is Smyrna; beautifully situated at the head of a gulf of the Archipelago—its shining walls and glittering terraces partly extending along the vine-clad shore, and partly stretching up the gentle slope of Mount Pagus, whose summit is crowned by a ruined citadel.

We suppose it now contains a population of about 150,000 inhabitants. But these are not all Turks or Mohammedans; at least one-half are Greeks, Armenians, Jews and Europeans. For this reason the Turks contemptuously call it "Izmir the infidel"; though sometimes, when they think of its groves and gardens, its orchards and vineyards, its rich verdant terraces and its deep blue sea, they are constrained to acknowledge it is "Izmir the lovely."

An eloquent writer says:

"You are here surrounded by the people and the confused customs of many and various nations—you see the fussy European adopting the East, and calming his restlessness with the long Turkish 'pipe of tranquillity'—you see Jews offering services and receiving blows—on one side you have a fellow whose dress and beard would give you a good idea of the true Oriental, if it were not for the silly expression of countenance with which he is swallowing an article in a French newspaper—and there, just by, is a genuine 'Osman-

lee,' or Turk, smoking away with all the majesty of a sultan." The bridge across the Meles, known as Pont Caravan, or the Caravan Bridge, is one of the most interesting spots in modern Smyrna, from the number of persons who there assemble, and take refreshments under the shade of the caginet trees. The scene, says Mr. Arundell, is a showy one, from the variety of head ornaments—the Turkish, Xebeque, and Greek turbans, the Armenian cardinal-looking red and

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black cap, the Jewish blue conical cap with the modest pencil-lined handkerchief wreathed around it—and last, but most conspicuous, the dignified Frank hat. The bridge is the principal approach of the town for caravans, travelers, and the peasants from the surrounding country.

The Greeks of Smyrna are not less indolent than their Turkish master; but if Greeks and Turks are idle, the Franks and Armenians are very active, and Smyrna continues at the present day to be the seat of no inconsiderable commerce. Ships from England throng into its placid waters, loaded with the cotton and woollen goods and hosiery which are manufactured at Manchester, Leeds and Nottingham; and,

in return, they bring back cargoes of figs and raisins, silk, skins, a dye called madder, olive-oil, some valuable gums, and many important drugs.

Smyrna is a very ancient city. Long before Rome or Athens attained any degree of prosperity, a colony was founded on its site by a people called the Æolians; which was afterward occupied by the Ionians, and as early as seven hundred years before Christ became a flourishing settlement. It was one of seven cities which claimed the honor of having been the birth-place of Homer, the great Greek poet, who sang of the Trojan war; and so convinced were its inhabitants of the justness of their pretensions, that they pointed out a cavern, near the spring of the little river Meles, as the place where he composed his wonderful poems.

After flourishing for several hundred years, Smyrna was destroyed by a Lydian king, Alyattes, and its ruins lay abandoned to the jackal and the bittern, until after the conquest of Asia Minor by Alexander the Great. One of that mighty monarch's successors, Antigonus, rebuilt the city, not on its original site, but two or three miles distant, close upon the sea-shore. Lysimachus, king of Macedonia, greatly enlarged and embellished it, erecting magnificent buildings, laying out beautiful gardens, and improving its fine harbor, which was soon recognized as one of the most famous in the Mediterranean. After the Romans had extended their supremacy along the shores of Asia Minor and Syria, Smyrna still continued to prosper; and such was the renown of its wealth, that men called it "The crown of Ionia," and "The jewel of Asia."

The Christian religion was introduced soon after the death of our Saviour, probably by one of the Apostles; and it found so many to accept it with joyous confidence, that a church was regularly established. To the "angel," or pastor, of this church, St. John wrote wise words of warning, counsel, and encouragement, from his retreat in the Isle of Patmos. Its members were not rich in this world's goods, but rich in faith,

and hope, and the assurance of immortal life. In the early days of Christianity, however, it was the poor and humble who opened their hearts to its glad tidings; not the wealthy, who shrank from a creed so simple and so austere; not the philosopher, who, in the arrogance of human self-sufficiency, pronounced it foolishness; not the powerful, who laughed to scorn the lowly disciples of the Nazarene.

"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty," writes St. John, recording the words of the Saviour, "(but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say that are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. ii. 9, 10.)

In the "crown of life" reference is supposed to be made to a rite observed by the pagan inhabitants of the city. They were wont to present a crown to the priest who had superintended the worship of their gods, on the expiration of his term of office. Not such a crown as this, says St. John, will be given unto the faithful Christian; but an infinitely more glorious one—an incorruptible crown—a crown of life.

From the words of the Apostle, it is evident that the Church in Smyrna was exposed to severe persecution, both from the Jews and the heathen. At first, the Christians suffered imprisonment only, or the loss of their little property; but under the Emperor Aurelius they were condemned to a far severer trial of their constancy. Those who refused to sacrifice to the Roman gods were first scourged and then put to death. Among the earliest and most distinguished victims of this cruelty was the saintly Polycarp, the pupil of St. John, from whose lips he had often heard the wondrous tale of our Lord's doings upon earth.

When the Aurelian persecution began, his friends and disciples persuaded him to retire from Smyrna into a neighbor-

ing village. On the approach of the Roman officers, he retreated yet farther inland. His place of concealment, however, being betrayed by two slaves, from whom the agonies of the torture had extracted a confession, he exclaimed, "The will of God be done," ordered food to be prepared for the officers of justice, and requested time for prayer, in which he spent two hours. He was then conveyed to Smyrna, on a day when all the populace were assembled in the open Stadium, or race-course. As he entered upon the public scene,

GROTTO OF THE NATIVITY.

the excited devotion of the trembling Christian spectators thought that they heard a voice from heaven—"Polycarp, be firm!" The Roman proconsul entreated him, in respect to his great age—for he was in his ninetieth year—to conceal his name; but disregarding the threats of the angry multitude, he proclaimed aloud that he was Polycarp. His trial then proceeded.

"Swear," cried his persecutors—"swear by the Genius of Cæsar; deny your false Christ, and say, 'Away with the godless!'"

The old man glanced compassionately upon the long rows of burning eyes and savage faces which glared upon him, and

lifting his gaze to heaven, exclaimed, but with a different meaning to what the populace intended, "Away, yes, away with the *God-less!*"

The proconsul, anxious to spare his life, then urged him further:

"Swear, and I will release thee; blaspheme Christ."

"For eighty years," replied Polycarp, "have I served Jesus, and He has never done me wrong; how can I blaspheme my Saviour and my King?"

The proconsul again commanded him to swear by the Genius of Cæsar. Polycarp simply replied by declaring himself a Christian, and by requesting a day to be appointed on which he might explain to the proconsul the pure and innocent doctrines of the Christian faith.

"Persuade the people to consent," said the compassionate governor.

"We owe respect to authority," answered Polycarp, "and therefore to thee I will explain the reasons of my conduct; but to the people I will offer no explanation."

The old man (as Dean Milman observes) knew too well the ferocious passions raging in their minds, and how vain would have been any attempt to allay them by the rational arguments of Christianity.

The proconsul threatened to expose him to the wild beasts.

"It is well," said Polycarp; "I shall then be speedily released from this life of misery."

He threatened to burn him alive.

"I fear not the fire which burns only for a moment: thou knowest that which burns forever and ever!"

A smile of radiant joy hovered on the venerable countenance of the Christian bishop as he made this reply; nor did he tremble when the herald advanced into the midst of the multitude, and thrice proclaimed—

"Polycarp has professed himself a Christian!"

The Jews and heathens responded with an overwhelming shout—

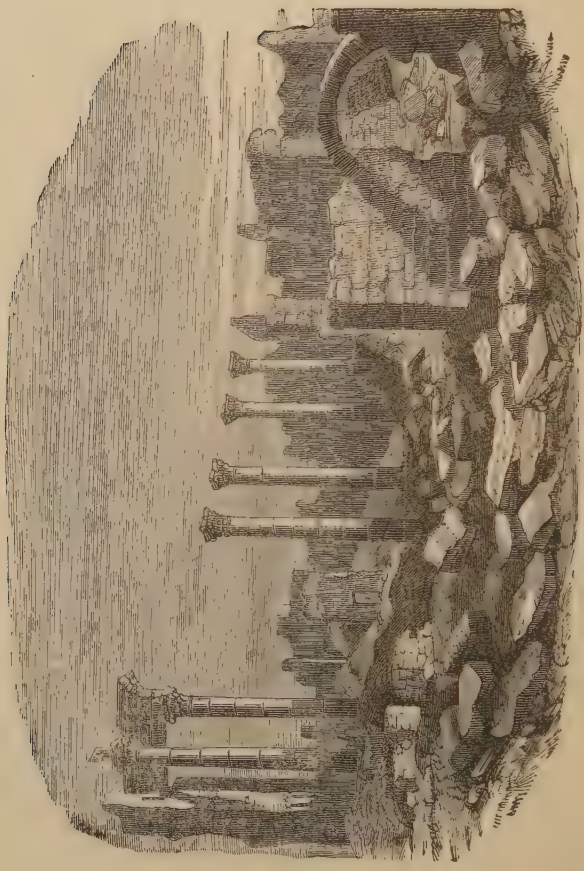
"This is the teacher of all Asia, the overthrower of our faith, who has perverted so many from sacrifice and the worship of the Deity!"

They demanded of the *Asiarch*, or president of the games, that he should instantly expose Polycarp to the lions; and he in vain endeavored to turn aside their fury by declaring that the public spectacles were over. But then a general cry arose that the Christian should be burned alive. The mob were active in collecting the fuel of the baths and other combustible materials, to build up a hasty but spacious funeral pile. Polycarp was speedily unrobed, and as he requested not to be nailed to the stake, was only bound to it.

The simple, earnest, and enthusiastic prayer which the aged bishop offered in this supreme moment will interest the reader:

"O Lord God Almighty, the Father of Thy well-beloved and ever-blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of Thee; the God of angels, powers, and of every creature, and of the whole race of the righteous who live before Thee; I thank Thee that Thou hast graciously thought me worthy of this day and this hour, that I may receive a portion in the number of Thy martyrs, and drink of Christ's cup, for the resurrection to eternal life, both of body and soul, in the incorruptibleness of the Holy Spirit; among whom may I be admitted this day, as a rich and acceptable sacrifice, as Thou, O faithful God, hast prepared, and foreshown, and accomplished. Wherefore I praise Thee for all Thy mercies; I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, with the eternal and heavenly Jesus Christ, Thy beloved Son; to whom, with Thee and the Holy Spirit, be glory now and forever."

The fire was then kindled, but, according to an old tradition, it failed to do its work. The flames rose curving like a rainbow round the serene victim, and gathering over the body



RUINS OF ANCIENT BOZRAH.

like a triumphal arch, left it uninjured. A Roman soldier was therefore ordered to despatch him. He pierced him to the heart with his spear, when blood poured forth so copiously, it was said, from the aged body as to extinguish the flames immediately about it.

It was thus that Polycarp, as his Lord had foretold, won "the crown of life."

His death, however, did not answer the aim proposed to themselves by his persecutors. Instead of Christianity being crushed, it flourished all the more abundantly, so that Smyrna soon became one of the principal strongholds of the new religion.

And well was it for the Smyrniotes that among them lived the disciples of so pure and beneficent a faith. For it happened, some years after, that their city was afflicted with a terrible earthquake. A generous sympathy was then displayed toward them by those whom they had so bitterly persecuted, and by their Christian brethren in the neighboring towns. Provisions were plentifully supplied; homes were offered to the houseless; the infirm and the children were conveyed in carriages from the scene of ruin. The Christians received the fugitives as if they had been of their own faith. Rich and poor nobly rivaled one another in charity. So great and so blessed was the influence of that Gospel which teaches us to regard all men as our brethren, and bids us cherish toward our neighbors a holy and self-denying love!

An occasional and a terrible visitant of this fair city is the epidemic known as the plague—an epidemic even more virulent in character and fatal in its effects than cholera, which is so justly dreaded in our own country. Its causes are the want of cleanliness in the houses, streets and inhabitants; the neglect of the commonest sanitary precautions; the pollutions which mingle with the waters used for drinking and lavatory purposes; and the sultry climate, unrelieved by

rains or cooling winds, prevailing during the hot months When the shadow of the Destroyer rests upon the doomed city, the European consuls and merchants retire into the country, or shut themselves up in their houses, admitting no one within their gates. Many of the citizens then abandon their dwellings, and live in the plains and on the mountain-slope under canvas; the islanders of the Levant return to their ocean-gardens; and silence reigns in the streets of the Frank quarter. But the Moslem, a fanatic believer in fate, and in the doctrine that human precautions avail nothing against the predestined course of events, disdains to escape, or to use the commonest measures of security. The crier from the mosque announces at certain hours the names of those who have been stricken down, and invites their friends to attend their remains to the grave. And these friends, disregarding the danger of infection, not only attend, but even wash the body before interment, and afterward carry it upon their shoulders, a change of bearers pressing forward at every ten or twenty yards to share in the last pious office.

Dr. Chandler, the eminent traveler, also complains of the insect-plagues which infest Smyrna; namely, a minute fly, which irritates by its puncture, and, settling on the white wall, eludes its angry pursuer with almost incredible activity; and the more formidable mosquitoes, which torment by their loud, incessant buzz, and by their attacks on the stranger's skin, repeated until they are gorged with blood.

When visiting the memorials of ancient greatness—the ruined palace, the shattered temple, and the broken statue—we are naturally impressed with a melancholy sense of the instability of earthly things and the vanity of human ambition. We feel that however high we rear our "cloudcapt towers," and however solidly we lay their massive foundations, they are the mere playthings of time, which in a few generations will level them with the dust, and write upon them the epitaph, *They once have been.* At Smyrna this

thought presses upon the mind of the traveler like an unwelcome visitor who will not be denied. Of the *ancient city*, scarcely a vestige remains. Of the exquisite treasures of art, collected here by the elegant genius of the Greeks, the most curious explorer can hardly discover a trace. Where are the broad streets, well-paved, and lined on either hand with marble colonnades, which once echoed with the murmur of song and the sound of commerce? Where are the stately palaces that formerly shone with gold and silver, with the masterpieces of the painter and the sculptor, with rich tapestry woven in skillful looms? Where are the temples, once enriched with the offerings of devout worshipers, and especially that temple of the goddess Cybele, or Earth, which was hardly inferior in magnificence to that of the Ephesian Diana? In these things men of old rejoiced and were proud, and yet they have been utterly swept away by the besom of destruction!

There remain, however, a few memorials of interest. Near the western gateway lies a colossal marble head, the face much mutilated, but apparently of fine workmanship; it is said to be an ideal personification of Smyrna; but Dr. Chandler thinks it a bust of Apollo, the god of poetry and the arts, and the impersonation of the sun. On a hill facing the north may be seen some few traces of the Stadium, where the holy Polycarp suffered; but it is stripped of its marble seats and decorations, and waves with green billows of corn. The martyr's tomb, was situated, it is said, at the north-west corner; and what is supposed to be it is still pointed out.

COINS OF EPHESUS AND SMYRNA.

The public buildings erected by the Turks are composed of materials derived from the ruined city. The market and the governor's palace were both constructed with the white

marble of the theater. During the excavations that at different times have been made here, numerous pedestals and statues, medals, and other works of art, have been brought to light; and no place, perhaps, has contributed more than Smyrna to enrich the collections of the curious in Europe with interesting memorials of antiquity.

Let us turn from the past to the present, from the ancient to the *modern city*, which flourishes under the bright sun of Asia, and looks down on the blue waters of the Mediterranean, like a beautiful woman in the mirror which reflects her charms. It is famous, as we have already said, for its fruits, its vineyards, its orchards, and its olive groves. Its figs are also celebrated; its grapes are often found, while still hanging on the stalk, converted into raisins by the sun; its lemons, oranges, and citrons are abundant and delicious. The waters of its sheltered bay swarm with fish; its groves are peopled with doves, thrushes, quails, fieldfares and snipes The Smyrna sheep are of a peculiar breed, and distinguished by broad tails which hang down like an apron, some weighing eight or ten pounds, and upward.

The Smyrniote women are a remarkably handsome race. Whether Frank, Greek, or Turkish, they all wear the Oriental dress, consisting of large trousers which reach to the ankle, long vests of rich silk or velvet, lined in winter with costly furs, and clasped round the waist by an embroidered girdle, with fastenings of silver or gold. Their plaited tresses are showered down the back in great profusion. The girls have sometimes about twenty of these, besides two or three bound round the head like a coronet, and adorned with flowers, jewels, pearls, or waving feathers. They are commonly stained of a chestnut color, which is much admired in Smyrna. Their apparel and bearing are alike antique, and they carry themselves with all the stately elegance of the Asiatics. They excel in a glow of color, as if the sun had ripened their cheeks into roses: and their eyes flash with a singular brightness.

Travelers vie with each other in enthusiasm in describing modern Smyrna.

"The entrance into the gulf of Smyrna is one of the finest in the world. The harbor is bold and extensive; it is guarded by a large fort, standing about two miles from the harbor. The town of Smyrna extends along the greater part of the bay, and has the appearance of great commercial activity. Most of the houses are built of wood, and, with their balconies and somewhat European roofs, give an appearance to the town very unlike that of the Oriental towns and cities with which our eyes had been so long familiar. . . . . In various parts, even amidst the buildings, there are fine plantations of cypresses, with their feathery spires of dark green, surrounding the many places of sepulture, and throwing a solemn and somber shade over the otherwise animated scene. The town is flanked by noble ridges of bold rock and mountain, whose sweeping forms are as graceful as can be imagined; and the town itself slopes down from a considerable distance to the brink of the bay. On the summit of the nearest and boldest mountain stands a castle of large dimensions—a noble object in the picture. The plains which surround the approaches to the harbor are profusely covered with vines, fig and olive trees, growing in full luxuriance. The season for preserving raisins and figs had commenced. Where we lay at anchor the harbor presented an entire circle of rock, island, and city; and the sunset was unspeakably superb. We had not been long at anchor ere numerous boats surrounded the vessel, laden with fruits of various kinds, the produce of this far-famed spot; delicious grapes of extraordinary size and sweetness, melons, figs, pears, etc. Besides these refreshing productions, we were served with various preparations of ice."—FISK'S *Pastor's Memorial.*

"The first sight of Smyrna, especially when approached by sea, must produce a strong impression. It presents a picture of indescribable beauty. The heights of Mount Pagus and the

plain beneath, covered with innumerable houses, the tiled roofs and painted balconies, the domes and minarets of mosques glowing and glittering with the setting sun; the dark walls of the old fortress crowning the top of the mountain, and the still darker cypress groves below; shipping of every form and country covering the bay beneath; flags of every nation waving on the ships of war and over the houses of the consuls; mountains on both sides of stupendous height and extraordinary outline . . . tinted with so strong a purple, that neither these nor the golden streaks on the water could safely be attempted to be represented by the artist; at the margin of the water on the right, meadows of the richest pasture, the velvet turf contrasted with the silvery olive, and covered with cattle and tents without number. All this will at once tell the traveler that he sees before him the city extolled by the ancients under the title of the *lovely*, the *crown of Ionia*, the *ornament of Asia*. It will remind the Christian that he is arrived at Smyrna, the church favored so much beyond all the other churches of the Apocalypse; the only city retaining any comparison with its original magnificence. *Ephesus*, the mart of all nations, the boast of Ionia, has long dwelt in darkness, as though she had not been; the streams of her commerce, like her own numerous ports, are all dried up. Where once proconsuls sat at *Laodicea*, now sit the vulture and the jackal. At *Sardis*, where once a Solon reminded Crœsus of his mortality, the solitary *cucuvaia* awakens the same reflection; and if *Philadelphia*, *Thyatira*, and *Pergamos* continue to exist, it is in a state of being infinitely degraded from that which they once enjoyed. *Smyrna* alone flourishes still; her temple and public edifices are no more; but her opulence, extent, and population are certainly increased."

"Few of the Ionian cities have furnished more relics of antiquity, or of greater merit, than Smyrna; but the convenience of removing them (and the many visits paid to them for this purpose) have caused even the very *ruins* to vanish;

and it is now extremely difficult to determine the sites of any of the ancient buildings, with the exception of the Stadium, Theater, and a temple within the Acropolis.

"The castle encloses seven acres, but in its present state affords not many remnants of very ancient date; the view from it is magnificent, and going down from its western gate toward the sea, at some distance, is the ground-plat of the Stadium, stripped of its marble seats.....Descending from the *northern* gateway, you come to the vestiges of a theater in the side of the hill, said to be the largest in Asia—the most interesting to the Christian spectator as the scene of the martyrdom of the venerable Polycarp. At a short distance only is the supposed site of his tomb, and it is not improbable that it is the true one; for there is no just reason for believing that in any period since that event Smyrna was for any long time without some Christians competent and disposed to perpetuate the tradition.

"The city wall, which, descending from the castle, included the Stadium on the one hand and the Theater on the other, has been long since demolished, and even its ruins removed....."

"Of modern Smyrna we may observe that its population is very great, and its ancient learning and buildings seem to be reviving. It is said that the condition of the Christians in Smyrna is better than that in any of the other of the seven churches who retain a remnant of Christianity. And thus, though she has so often been destroyed, either partially or wholly—by fire, earthquake and plague—yet has Smyrna survived all these visitations, and seems yet, in a degree at least, to partake of the blessing which, when no fault was found in her, and no judgment denounced against her, was given."—ARUNDELL'S *Researches in Asia Minor.*

Mr. Wilson writes, in his account of Smyrna:

"There is a most commodious church, with the British arms placed over the seat of the consul. Not having heard

a sermon since I left Marseilles, I felt a delight which can be only appreciated by those who have been long removed from our land of Gospel light, and can truly say, in the words of the Royal writer, 'I was glad to go into the house of the Lord.'"

Mr. Wilson also narrates an interesting fact with which he became acquainted, viz.: the martyrdom of a Greek Christian, whose patient sufferings for the faith called to mind the brighter days of Smyrna, when her martyrs, with Polycarp at their head, endured with such constancy, and "were tortured, not accepting deliverance."

"A Turk had prevailed by artifice upon a Greek Christian, twenty-four years of age, to enter his service, abandon his faith, and embrace the tenets of Mohammed, when he assumed the costume of a Mussulman. On the expiration of his engagement, the Greek departed for Mount Athos in Macedonia, and was absent about twelve months, when he returned to Smyrna; but his conscience having reproached him for the act of apostasy of which he had been guilty, he proceeded to the Turkish judge, threw down his turban, declared he had been deceived, and would still live and die a Christian. Every effort was made to prevail on him to continue in the principles of Mohammedanism, by offering him great rewards if he did, and threatening him with the severest penalties if he did not. The Greek, having rejected every bribe, was thrust into a dungeon and tortured, which he bore most heroically, and was then led forth in public to be beheaded, with his hands tied behind his back. The place of execution was a platform opposite to one of the principal mosques, where a blacksmith, armed with a cimeter, stood ready to perform the dreadful operation. To the astonishment of the surrounding multitude, this did not shake his fortitude; and although he was told that it would be quite sufficient if he merely declared he was not a Christian, rather than do so he chose to die. Still entertaining a hope that the young man might re-

tract, especially when the instrument of death was exhibited, these offers were again and again pressed upon him, but without effect. The executioner was then ordered to peel off with his sword part of the skin of his neck. The fortitude and strong faith of this Christian, who expressed the most perfect willingness to suffer, enabled him to reach that highest elevation of apostolic triumph, evinced by rejoicing in tribulation; when, looking up steadfastly to heaven, like the martyr Stephen, he loudly exclaimed, 'I was born with Jesus, and shall die with Jesus'; and bringing to recollection the exclamation of Polycarp, in this very place, he added, 'I have served Christ, and how can I revile my King who has kept me!' On pronouncing these words, his head was struck off at once.....The head was then placed under the *left* arm (after a *Mohammedan* is beheaded, the head is placed under the *right* arm, and in this manner he is interred), and, with the body, remained on the scaffold three days exposed to public view, after which the Greeks were permitted to bury it. This was the third instance of the kind which occurred within the last twenty years.....When we read this history of Christian faith and constancy, so closely resembling and coming up to the measure of primitive grace and patience, and then reflect that these things happened in Smyrna in our own day, nearly 1800 years after the epistle of that church was written; when again we remember the words of that epistle —its commendation (free from *all reproof*), its encouragement to perseverance, and promise of reward, and then turn to the other churches, and see *their* desolation, and the darkness which covers *them*—we can hardly fail to be struck with the faithfulness of God's word, and to feel that *yet* the blessing lingers over Smyrna, 'Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—RAE WILSON'S *Travels*.

The same blessing is for us if the same faithfulness is ours. The same exhortation is addressed to every Christian, coupled with the same promise. And how glorious that promise! Who can worthily speak of it—who can describe the lustre of that crown that shall be given to every believer? Age after age shall pass away, and still every jewel in that crown shall be as bright as when the Redeemer's hand first placed the radiant circle on your brow. For it is a crown of LIFE—a crown of immortality and glory, "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." And He who now, in your earthly struggles, beckons to you from the skies, and holds the reward of victory to cheer you in your conflicts with sin and Satan, is "the first and the last," the infinite, the eternal One, pledging all the power of Deity to carry you through this mortal strife, and make you more than conqueror for His name's sake. I am He "which was dead and is alive," He tells you. I have been subject to the same sorrows and persecutions as you. I have groaned beneath the tortures of the body, and have bled from very agony of soul. I have felt the damps of death upon my brow, have hung a lifeless corpse upon the cross, have been wrapped in the gloomy cerements of the grave, and can sympathize with my people in every infirmity and pang which assails the dying. But now I am "alive," to assure them of my protection, my ability to help and deliver from death and the tomb. Take courage, then, in all your trials, and continue "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

PERGAMOS.

The Stronghold of Lysimachus—An Illustrious Seat of Learning—Parchment—Antipas—The Church of St. John's Day—The New Testament in Pergamos—The Storks among the Ruins—The Acropolis—Temple of Minerva—Palace of Attalus—Shrine of Esculapius—Number of Population—Picturesque Scene—Greek Church.

PERGAMOS, now called *Bergama*, was anciently one of the most distinguished of the Seven Churches. It is situated on the river Caicus (or Bakir), and is supposed to have been of Greek origin; but nothing is certainly known of its history until Lysimachus, one of the soldier kings who succeeded to the spoils of the mighty empire of Alexander the Great, made it his stronghold, and deposited within its walls his treasures. These treasures he left in the charge of an eunuch, named Philetærus, who revolted against his master, and founded a kingdom, of which he was the first ruler. He reigned from 280 years before Christ to 263, and was succeeded by Eumenes, who died in 241. Then came Attalus, a wise and successful sovereign, who first assumed the title of King of Pergamos, and flourished from B. C. 241 to B. C. 197; Eumenes II., B. C. 197–159, who was an ally of the Romans, and received from them a large increase of territory, in acknowledgment of his services; Attalus II., B. C. 159–138; and Attalus III., B. C. 138–133, who by his will bequeathed his kingdom to the great Republic of Rome, whereupon it was incorporated in the province of Asia.

Pergamos, under these peaceful and able monarchs, became an illustrious seat of learning, and rejoiced in the possession of a splendid library. It glittered with baths and palaces, aqueducts, amphitheaters, fountains, statues, with all the evidences of artistic luxury and boundless wealth. Strangers

were attracted thither from all parts of the world by the fame of its riches, its magnificence, and its learning; and in the time of our Saviour it stood conspicuous as the brightest and most prosperous of all the Asiatic cities. Here was invented parchment; or, if not invented—which some authorities deny—at all events so considerably improved, and so much more skillfully adapted to writing purposes, that it received the name of *Pergamena—Charta pergamena*—whence comes our English word. Its use spread all over Europe; a fortunate circumstance for literature, owing to its durability.

The doctrines of Christ were early preached in this famous city, and early found believers; but, as might have been expected from its devotion to luxurious arts and magical studies, numerous false teachers soon arose, who corrupted the pure faith, and led astray the souls of men. Some disciples there were who remained steadfast and unwavering, but the number of the ungodly was so great that the Saviour, in His message to the Seven Churches, could not but express His Divine indignation when addressing the Church of Pergamos:

"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.....Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth." (Rev. ii. 13, 14.)

Of the martyr Antipas, said to have been the first bishop of the city, nothing certain is known. But he was not the last who suffered for Christ's name at the hands of the Pergamenes.

VIEW OF PERGAMOS.

The few miserable inhabitants of the modern town pretend to point out the very church where the disciples assembled to whom John's message was addressed, and also the tomb of Antipas. It is needless to say that there is no evidence of their authenticity. With the sword of His mouth has the Divine Redeemer fought against Pergamos, and its present desolation is an impressive commentary on its past vices and ancient magnificence.

When Mr. Macfarlane visited it, a little church situated under the Acropolis—low, dark, narrow and ruinous—was the only one that echoed the name of Christ. It is probable that the primitive Church to which John addressed himself was not *materially*—that is, not in brick or stone, size or architecture—much superior to this lowly fane; but how immeasurably different the light that shone within it—the Spirit that animated it!

It was here that our traveler saw some copies of the New Testament in Romaic, edited by *Englishmen*, and printed at *London*. The sight naturally suggested a train of curious reflections. When Christ's Gospel was first proclaimed in these regions, what was Britain?

A scarcely known island, whose savage inhabitants were bravely fighting for freedom against the legions of Rome. But through what language has Britain, as well as all Europe, since derived its knowledge of the acts and teaching of the Son of God and His disciples? Through the Greek, which has not only enjoyed the privilege of instructing us in all that is sublime and beautiful in poetry, philosophy and eloquence, but the honor of inculcating on the minds of men the precepts of Divine Wisdom, and of making known to the world the way of salvation and the condition of eternal life. And now it is from the remote island which the Greeks never knew, from the once barbarous England swept by the eagles of imperial Rome, that the church at Pergamos obtains the Bible printed in its own language—obtains that Book

of Life which was first given to man in these very regions! The *human* inhabitants of Pergamos are dull, depressed, and ignorant; and the traveler turns from them with infinite pleasure to the animal population—to the storks and turtle-doves that throng the lofty, castle-like walls of the old Greek Church of Agois Theologos, or sail with expanded wings across the blue twilight sky; or to the cuckoos that fill the air with melancholy music.

We borrow from Mr. Mcfarlane's pages a graceful picture.

From an open gallery in the house where he lodged at Pergamos he was accustomed to look out upon the massive walls of the ancient church already mentioned, which were incessantly frequented by troops of stately storks. "They were always divided into pairs; sometimes only the long elastic neck of one of them would be seen towering from the nest, while the consort would stand by on one of his long slim legs, and watch with the assiduity of affection; sometimes one of them, caressing his mate ere he left her, would spread his broad snow-white wings, fly away to the town or the fields, and thence return with a large twig or other materials for the nest, or a supply of provisions for his occupied partner. Other couples would be grouped on the edges of the stupendous ruin, entwining their pliant necks and mixing their long bills; or in pretty coquetry, one would bend her neck over her back and bury her bill in the luxuriant plumage, and her consort would make his long bill clack with a peculiar sharp, and monotonous sound, and then in gentle force raise the recreant head, and embrace it with quivering delight. Mixed with these large white birds, or issuing from their nests in the crannies of the walls below the nests of the storks, or flitting athwart the twilight sky, were thousands of little blue turtle-doves, forming an amorous choir which never ceased by day or by night."

The Acropolis, or citadel (which was always the most ancient part, and the stronghold of Greek cities), stands on a hill

200 feet above the plain, now crowned with its ruins, amongst which those of a castle or fortress resembling those at Smyrna and Ephesus, covering the whole summit, and including about eight acres, stand prominent. It was built in the more prosperous times of Pergamos, though much of its present form is of a later date. The town afterward became more extended, and the modern one lies in part on the slope of the hill, but principally in the plain.

Among the antiquities of Pergamos may be mentioned the remains of the Temple of Minerva, which rose on a high area, and was unrivaled in sublimity of situation, being visible from the vast plain and the Mediterranean Sea. Its columns now lie in a lofty heap.

With a descent almost perpendicular on the north and west sides, is a very narrow valley, with a rivulet over which at one extremity, the great aqueduct of one row of lofty arches is constructed; and at the other, a pile of massive buildings, which, filling the whole breadth of the valley, was the front and grand entrance into an extensive amphitheater . . . the most complete edifice of the kind in Asia Minor. Here, at times, by retaining the waters of the rivulet, a naumachia, or place for the exhibition of a mock sea-fight was formed; while at others, when the arena was dry, and the stream confined within its narrow bounds, it was used for chariot, gymnastic and other exercises. Of the site of the royal palace of King Attalus, celebrated for its beautiful prospect (and therefore probably occupying an elevated and commanding position), nothing can be positively asserted.

Once there was at Pergamos the celebrated Temple of Esculapius, which was also an asylum; and the concourse of individuals to which was without number or cessation. They passed the night there to invoke the false deity, who communicated remedies either in dreams or by the mouth of his priests, who distributed drugs and performed surgical operations. The Roman emperor Caracalla repaired to Pergamos

RESTORATION.

for the recovery of his health, but Esculapius was unmoved by his prayers. Pergamos is emphatically described in the Revelation as the place "where Satan's seat is"; and it is singular that on the Pergamean coins a serpent is engraved as an emblem of their tutelary divinity; thus affording an analogy to the *old Serpent, the dragon*, as Satan is termed in Scripture.

The subsequent history of the Church of Pergamos is little known. It shared the fate of its sister churches, and had its own share of persecution, until the time of Constantine For several centuries its bishops continued to attend the councils of the Church, but at length all traces of it disappeared.

The threat against it has been almost literally fulfilled, but still its candlestick has not been removed out of its place, like that of Ephesus. Pergamos has, in a measure at least, been saved from destruction; and though in the midst of a blindness and poverty sadly contrasted with her former privileged condition under the first rays of Gospel light, and amid the treasures of unperverted truth, a portion of her inhabitants still preserve the Christian name and worship.

Mr. Arundell thinks the *Christian* population of this city has much increased of late—that of the whole city he considers underrated at fifteen thousand; of which fifteen hundred are Greeks, two hundred are Armenians—who have a church —and about a hundred, Jews, with a synagogue: all the rest are Mohammedans.

"The grand plain of Pergamos," writes Mr. Arundell, "was in full view before us. . . . In the front distance rose the majestic Acropolis. We arrived at a mill soon after, and remained there a short time. The miller, a Greek, came up to me, as, seated under a tree, with Pergamos before me, I was reading the message to the angel of that church, in the Greek Testament. The poor man earnestly begged me to give him some medical assistance: he looked wretchedly ill, and was evidently in a deep decline. I gave him what ad-

vice I could, accompanied by a medicine of great efficacy—the book which I was reading. The poor fellow received it most gratefully, lamenting that he could not read himself, but he had children, he said, who should read it to him. . . . Toward evening a busy scene presented itself in the plain on both sides of the road: numerous plows worked by buffaloes; maize and dari collecting in heaps; and in other places men, women, and children employed among green crops. . . . At a quarter past six we arrived at Pergamos: the setting sun threw its strong shadows on the stupendous rock of the Acropolis and the mountain behind it. The country immediately before entering the town was of an unpromising aspect, rocky and bare of trees, and in the winter must be very desolate, from the greater part of the low ground being covered with water. As we passed, however, under the arches of a bridge, and thence through a burial-ground, the view improved much, from the abundance of cypresses, poplars, and other trees. On entering the town, now nearly dark, I was struck by some enormous high masses of walls on the left, strongly contrasting with the diminutive houses beneath and around them. I heard subsequently, that they are the remains of the Church of St. John.

I accompanied a Greek priest to his church, the only church at present in Pergamos; it lies on the ascent of the castle hill, and is a poor shed covered with earth. Though the sun was blazing in full splendor on all the scenes without, this poor church was so dark within, that even with the aid of a glimmering lamp, I could not distinctly see the figures on the screen. On one side of it another priest kept a little school of thirty scholars. I gave him a Testament. The contrast between the magnificent remains of the Church of St. John, which lay beneath, and this its poor representative, is as striking as between the poverty of the present state of religion among the modern Greeks, and the rich abundance of Gospel light which once shone over Pergamos."

NAZARETH.

THYATIRA.

Situated in a Broad Plain — Population—Luxuriant Vegetation—Locusts—"That Woman Jezebel"—Lydia—The Trade in Purple—Ruins—Commerce—Contrast of Piety and Wickedness in the Church.

FINELY situated in a broad, open plain, a little to the south of the river Hyllus, stands Thyatira, now known as *Ak-hissar*, or the White Castle. It lies between Pergamos and Sardis, and to the south-east of Smyrna. It was one of the Seven Churches included in the ministrations of St. John, who in his Saviour's name thus addressed its angel:

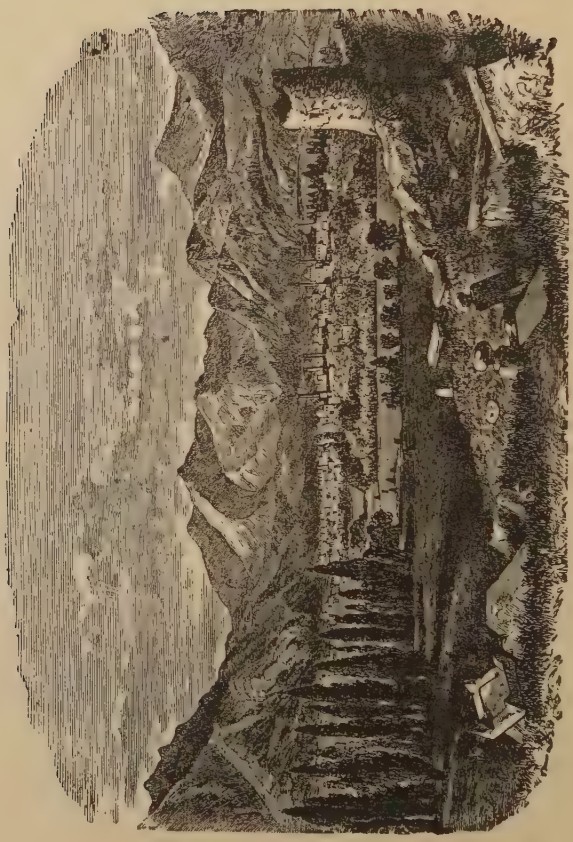
"I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first." (Rev. ii. 19.)

After complaining, however, of the sinful lenity with which the Christian brotherhood seem to have regarded certain glaring vices, and threatening sinners with severe chastisement, the message continues:

"But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira (as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak), I will put upon you none other burden." (Rev. ii. 24.)

The present population of the not unpicturesque town which occupies the site of the ancient Thyatira, cannot exceed 1,000 families, of whom about 400 are Greek and Armenian Christians.

Its appearance, as you approach it, is that of a very long line of cypresses, poplars, and other trees, amidst which the minarets of several mosques shine brightly, and the roofs of a few houses are conspicuous. On the left is a view of dis-



VIEW OF THYATIRA

tant hills, whose verdant crest is continued over the town: and on the right, adjoining the town, rises a low eminence, crowned by two ruined windmills.

The surrounding country is clothed with luxuriant vegetation. The white rose is extremely abundant, and scents the air with an exquisite fragrance. But in the locust the husbandman has a most formidable enemy, which in one fatal night often renders useless the toil of weeks. A modern traveler saw an army of these injurious insects literally take possession of the town. He says he was perfectly astonished at their multitudes; they were, in truth, "as a strong people set in battle array; they run like mighty men; they climb the wall like men of war." (Joel ii. 1–11.)

In the epistle addressed by the Evangelist to the church at this place, we read of "that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess." This may not have been, as some writers suppose, a sect of evil-workers personified, but, says Trench, a wicked woman in the church of Thyatira, inheriting from the wicked wife of Ahab (1 Kings, xvi. 31, 32) this name of infamy in the Church of God, and following hard in her footsteps.

Thyatira was a Macedonian colony, and its prosperity was formerly due to its manufacture of a celebrated purple (or scarlet) dye, which was highly esteemed by the Romans. In the days of St. Paul there lived in the city a woman named Lydia, who traded in this dye, and was probably a person of considerable wealth and influence. She had already become a convert to Judaism, but on hearing Paul preach, eagerly embraced the Christian faith, and was baptized at Philippi. (Acts xvi. 9–15.) It is not unreasonable to conclude that by her example and exhortations she induced others to accept the living truths of Christ's Gospel, and was thus the founder of the church at Thyatira?

Even at the present time Thyatira is famous for dyeing,

and the cloths which are here colored scarlet are considered superior to any others furnished by Asia Minor.

"Very few of the ancient buildings remain here; one we saw, which seems to have been a market-place, having six pillars sunk very low in the ground. We could not find any ruins of churches; and, inquiring of the Greeks about it, they told us there were several great buildings of stone under ground (which we were very apt to believe, from what we had observed in other places), where, digging somewhat deep, they met with strong foundations, that without all question formerly supported great buildings. I find, by several inscriptions, that the inhabitants of this city, as well as those of Ephesus, were, in the times of heathenism, great votaries and worshipers of the goddess Diana. The city has a very great supply of water, which streams in every street, flowing from a neighboring hill. . . . it is populous, inhabited mostly by Turks . . . few Christians residing among them; those Armenians we found here being strangers who came hither to sell sashes, handkerchiefs, etc., which they bring out of Persia. They are maintained chiefly by the trade of cotton wool, which they send to Smyrna, for which commodity Thyatira is very considerable." "It is this trade," says Rycaut, "the crystalline waters, cool and sweet to the taste and light on the stomach, the wholesome air, the rich and delicious country which cause this city so to flourish in our days, and to be more happy than her other desolate and comfortless sisters."

"On the way, we observed many columns and antiquities notifying an ancient town. Mr. Arundell discovered an inscription, containing the words, '*From Thyatira.*' Ak-Hissar, the modern Thyatira, is situated on a plain, and is embosomed in cypresses and poplars. The buildings are in general mean; but the khan in which we are at present residing is by far the best which I have yet seen. . . . The language addressed to Thyatira is rather different from that of the other

epistles. The commendations are scarcely surpassed even in the epistle to Philadelphia, while the conduct of some of its members was impious and profligate. The Church thus exhibited a contrast of the most exalted piety with the very *depths of Satan.*"

And what are the features for which the Saviour commends the little flock of true believers existing in the bosom of this partially corrupt church? They are wholly practical. Not the depth of their Christian experience, not their attainments in spiritual knowledge, not the fervors and raptures of their piety, but their practical holiness and obedience, their "works," their "love," their "service," their "trust," their "patience," are the points of character selected by Christ himself. Faith no doubt is the root from which the other graces spring, but how evident it is, from the whole tenor of the commendation, not only in this but in every one of the seven epistles, that the faith which is not continually bringing forth fruits of patience and holiness, and habitual and progressive sanctification, is worth nothing! We say *progressive,* for you observe how prominent this characteristic of living piety is made in the passage: "I know thy works, and *the last to be more than the first.*" The Bible is eminently practical, and it is a sad deficiency where Christian teaching is lacking in this element. We cannot be forever establishing principles. If these are vital, they should lead to the growth of the believer. Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, and determine this, not by frames and feelings and professions, but by your fruits, by your "service" to God, as the Saviour here denominates it. Remember, of faith, hope and charity, the greatest is and ever must be, charity, or love. "Show me thy faith without thy works," says James, "and I will show thee my faith by my works." And wisely did he say so, for the eye of man can see, and the eye of God will see, no other but that which works by love and purifies the heart. What are you doing for God? What in the way of charity? What in the

way of self-denial? What in the way of patience and purity? What in the way of close and intimate communion with God himself? How many there are who have attained correct notions in religion; but their religion is not practical. The world, Satan, self, see them to be just as earthly, sensual, devilish as any of the other votaries of this trinity of evil.

Examine yourself by the single test which our Lord proposes in this passage. Can you truly say that your "last works are more than the first"? Are you, heart and soul, among the little flock on whom the Saviour pronounces His benediction? Is Christianity a growing principle within you? Is your hatred of sin greater, your avoidance of it more determined and decisive, now than at any former period? Are your obedience, your prayerfulness, your self-denial, on the increase? These are the unerring features of God's children. They form more than resemblance—relationship. Progress is that family likeness without which no child of God was ever found—without which not an individual of Christ's redeemed family ever passed from the school of trial on earth to the happy and rejoicing society of the Father's house, the Christian's home.

SARDIS

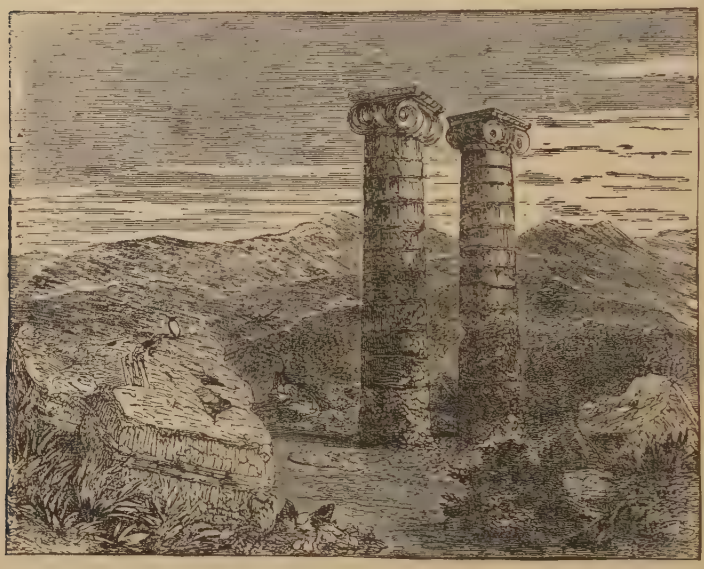
On the River Pactolus—Capital of Crœsus—Solon—"Call no man happy till he is Dead"—Crœsus Conquered and Released by Cyrus—Sardis Captured by Alexander and by the Romans—Epistle to Sardis—A Miserable Village—Xerxes—Huge Tumuli—Tomb of Alyattes—Temple of Cybele—The Acropolis—Description by Arundell—Ascent of a Precipice—Churches—Palace of Crœsus—Fording the Hermus—Burial-Places of Myriads—Refusing the New Testament—Solitude.

POETICALLY famous in ancient song and legend was the river Pactolus, on whose green banks was formerly situated Sardis, the chief city of the kingdom of Lydia. Five centuries and a half before the birth of Christ it was the capital of Crœsus, a mighty and magnificent monarch, whose name has grown into a proverb for immense wealth. At the age of thirty-five he ascended the Lydian throne, and during a reign of fourteen years, made himself master of all the Greek States of Asia Minor, exercising a despotic power which extended from the shores of the blue Mediterranean to the borders of Persia. At the height of his prosperity he was visited by Solon, the great Athenian philosopher, to whom he boasted of his splendor, his successes, and his inexhaustible treasures. It is said that he then inquired of the wise Greek who was the happiest man that he had ever seen. Solon, instead of flattering the king by naming him, as he had expected, answered that no one could be esteemed happy until he had finished life in a happy way.

Not long afterward, Crœsus waged war against Cyrus, the Persian conqueror. His armies were defeated; he was compelled to retreat within the walls of Sardis; the city was assaulted, captured, and he himself taken prisoner. The victor ordered him to be burned alive. As the humbled and

unfortunate sovereign stood in chains at the foot of the blazing pyre, and meditated upon his reverse of fortune, he suddenly remembered the warning of the Greek philosopher, and breaking a long silence with a heavy sigh, thrice repeated his name: "Solon! Solon! Solon!"

Cyrus immediately inquired for whom he was calling, and upon hearing all the circumstances narrated, was so impressed with the fickleness of the world's fortune, and the precarious



RUINS OF SARDIS.

nature of human prosperity, that he ordered the fire to be quenched, and Crœsus to be released, and made him thenceforward his counselor and friend.

There may be some doubt as to the truth of this old tradition, but none as to the value of the moral it is intended to enforce.

Sardis was a second time captured, by Alexander the Great. Like the rest of Asia Minor, it afterward fell into the hands

of the Romans. In the reign of the Emperor Tiberius it was destroyed by an earthquake, but was rebuilt through the emperor's generous assistance. A Christian church was founded here soon after the death of Christ. From the message addressed to it by St. John, it is plain, however, that its members were slothful in well-doing, and deficient in earnest, living faith.

"I know thy works," says the Saviour, "that thou hast a name that thou livest, and—*art dead*. . . . Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.' (Rev. iii. 1–3.)

But even in Sardis there were some who held fast the truth, and in their daily lives showed themselves full of the grace of God. "Thou hast a few names," wrote St. John, "which have not defiled their garments"; and they, said the Apostle, should walk with their Lord in white, for they were worthy. Oh, if so much can be said of me, and of you, dear reader, how blessed will be our lot!

The modern name of Sardis is *Sart*, a poor miserable village, inhabited chiefly by shepherds, and situated somewhat to the north of the remains of the ancient city.

"I sat beneath the sky of Asia," says a modern traveler, "to gaze upon the ruins of Sardis, from the banks of the golden-sanded Pactolus. Beside me were the cliffs of that Acropolis (or citadel), which, centuries before, the hardy Median scaled while leading on the conquering Persians, whose tents had covered the very spot on which I was reclining. Before me were the vestiges of what had been the palace of the gorgeous Crœsus; within its walls were once congregated the wisest of mankind, Thales, Cleobulus, and Solon. Far in the distance rose the gigantic tumuli (or the tombs of earth) of the Lydian monarchs; and around them spread those very plains once trodden by the countless hosts

of Xerxes, the Persian king, when hurrying on to find defeat and a sepulcher at Marathon. But all, all had passed away. There were before me the fanes of a dead religion, the tombs of forgotten monarchs, and the palm tree that waved in the banquet-hall of kings."

The tombs, or tumuli, referred to in the preceding quotations, are memorials of extraordinary interest. They are situated close to the Lake of Gygæa, five miles from Sardis, and are of various sizes. Four or five are distinguished by their superior magnitude, so that from a distance they rise against the deep blue sky like hills. It is supposed that they were built up of soil from the bed of the lake; and the labor of many men must have been employed in this task for month after month. All of them are now covered with fresh green turf, and many retain their conical form without any sinking in at the top.

CORAL OF MEDITERRANEAN.

One of the barrows, the most conspicuous and the largest, has been described as the greatest work in Lydia—inferior only to the huge piles raised by the Egyptians and Assyrians.

It is the tomb of King Alyattes, the father of Crœsus, and consists of a huge mound of earth raised on a solid basement of large stones, by the toil of three classes of the people. Alyattes died B. C. 562, so that upward of two thousand four hundred years have elapsed since his bones were deposited in this gigantic sepulcher, whose construction doubtless cost many tears, and entailed great sufferings upon a considerable portion of Lydia. For labor then was forced and badly paid, and the cultivation of the soil must necessarily have been

neglected while the human ants were building their great ant-hill.

The tomb of the Lydian monarch measures three-quarters of a mile in circuit; its height is two hundred feet, its breadth thirteen hundred! It has been conjectured that a valuable treasure is concealed within it.

The ruins of Sardis are remarkable for their grandeur. The village and its vicinity boast of two of the most interesting remains of antiquity in Asia—the colossal tumuli which we have just described, and the vast Ionic Temple of Cybele near the bank of the Pactolus. There are also a theater, and vestiges of a large church, which were examined by Leake, the celebrated traveler, and found to consist almost entirely of fragments of older edifices.

Of this temple to Cybele, second only in splendor to that of the Ephesian Diana, five columns were standing when Dr. Chandler visited the spot. The shafts were fluted, and the capitals designed and carved with exquisite skill. In 1812, Mr. Cockerell, the architect, found only three erect (now reduced to two), and these buried to nearly half their height in the soil accumulated in the valley since their erection; chiefly, it is probable, by the destruction of the hill of the Acropolis, which is continually crumbling, and presents a most rugged and fantastic outline. Other portions of the temple were also visible—enough to show that it was one of the greatest triumphs of Greek architecture.

To obtain an accurate conception of the beauty of the surrounding country, it is necessary to ascend the Acropolis, and stand upon its bold and rugged brow. At its foot spreads a broad and fertile plain, traversed by the river classically famous as the Hermus; at the extremity of the plain, a direction nearly due north, sleeps the tranquil Gygæan lake, edged round with the colossal sepulchers of the Lydian kings; and, beyond, the summer sky seems to rest on the strong shoulders of a lofty mountain ridge.

All is lovely, but all invested with a certain air of sublimity. And the traveler, looking forth upon the varied features of the scene, cannot but be moved with a feeling of sadness; for the strange history of the past rushes upon his mind, and the annals of the different races who have occupied this fertile region, and yet have left scarcely a single memorial of their supremacy, scarcely a single monument of their genius, stir his memory with melancholy thoughts. Here Crœsus counted his treasures; here Alexander the Great led the victorious charge; and what remains? A few shattered pillars and broken walls, and a long line of silent tombs!

Mr. Arundell writes:

"Sardis, the capital of Lydia, identified with the names of Crœsus, and Cyrus, and Alexander—great even in the days of Augustus;—ruined by earthquakes, and restored to its importance by the munificence of Tiberius;—Christian Sardis, offering her hymns of thanksgiving for deliverance from Pagan persecution in the magnificent temples of the Virgin and Apostle;—Sardis, again fallen under the yoke of a false religion, but still retaining her numerous population and powerful defense only five hundred years ago;—what is Sardis now? 'How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people!' (Lam. i. 1.) A few mud huts, inhabited by Turkish herdsmen, and a mill or two, contain all the present population of Sardis. The only members of the church of Sardis are two Greek servants to the Turkish miller.

"The Acropolis is of extremely difficult and dangerous ascent, and the few walls at its summit, on which are an inscription or two, and some ancient fragments, would not compensate for the risk and fatigue; the view is, however, magnificent.

"In my first visit to Sardis, last December, I was accompanied by some naval friends; one of whom, with the fearlessness so characteristic of a British sailor, mounted to the top of a high but narrow fragment, considerably out of perpendicular, and inclining over that tremendous precipice

which Crœsus neglected to guard, as believing it to be wholly inaccessible; the fragment was undermined by many a perforation beneath, and at the top the whole crumbled under the touch like dust. . . .

"Of the Temple of Cybele, only two pillars remain at present; the Turks have recently destroyed the rest, for the sake of the lead connecting the blocks. It is impossible to behold these magnificent columns without being inexpressibly affected. Colonel Leake believes these to be antecedent to the capture of Sardis by Cyrus, and yet the columns are as perfect as if erected yesterday! The objects of greatest interest to the Christian traveler are the ruins of two churches; one at the back of the mill, said to be the Church of the Virgin, and another in front of it, called the Church of St. John. Of the former there are considerable remains, and it is almost wholly constructed with magnificent fragments of earlier edifices. . . . of the other, there are several stone piers having fragments of brick arches above them, and standing east and west.

"A theater, and stadium connected with it, are distinguishable under the northern brow of the Acropolis, but the remains are few. . . .

"Of the supposed Gerusia, called also the House of Crœsus, which lies in the plain. . . . I measured the first room. . . . it was a hundred and fifty-six feet long, by forty-two and a half wide; and the walls, celebrated for the durability of the bricks, were ten feet and a half thick. Might this not have been the Gymnasium?

"There are some other remains, built of very massy stones, now much corroded by age, near a small stream, one of the branches of the river Pactolus which runs down into the Hermus. These remains appear to have been oblong apartments. . . . the bed of the adjoining stream and the stones are not golden at present, but of a dark color, as if containing iron. Mineralogists are, I believe, agreed that most of the auriferous sands in all parts of the world are of a black or

reddish color, and are consequently ferruginous. It was observed by Reaumur that the sand which accompanies the gold of most rivers is composed of particles of iron, and small grains of rubies and hyacinth.

"We left Sardis, and crossed the plain in an oblique direction, north-west, toward the Hermus, to ford the ferry. We arrived at the river, having crossed an extensive burial-ground on our way, full of fragments. . . . . The ferry-boat was destroyed; no alternative remained but to ford the river, or return to Smyrna without seeing Thyatira. It was very broad, and looked very formidable. While we were hesitating, a fine Turkish lad of eighteen came up to us, and, unsolicited, offered to be our guide. He accompanied us to the brink of the river a short way below, and pointed out the fording-place. The surigee plunged in, but before he had reached a quarter of the way across, he became terrified, and returned. The young Turk instantly mounted one of the horses, and rode in before us. It was providentially not so deep or rapid as to throw the horses off their legs, though very broad, and we reached the opposite bank in safety, though sufficiently wet. We offered some money to our guide, who had earned it so well, but with a generosity which formed a most striking contrast to the conduct of the Christian at Sardis, he positively refused to take a para! After crossing the Hermus, our course was due north, by a very gradual ascent to a village, close to which our further advance in that direction was arrested by a narrow but deep morass, and we were compelled to return some way to find a sort of bridge on the right. Crossing it, we had on our right a large oblong elevation, squared like an entrenchment,

QUOIT PITCHER.

behind which rose the top of the enormous tumulus of Alyattes, the Gygæan lake lying beyond it, though not just then in view. Our road was now through an extensive and open though not level country, covered with innumerable tumuli; the larger number of stupendous size. It gave a powerful but affecting impression of the once mighty metropolis of the empire of Lydia; but even the population of that great city, and the countless hosts of the Lydians and Persians, and Greeks and Romans, which fought and fell in the plains before it, were scarcely sufficient to account for the multitude of these astonishing monuments. Perhaps, like the mummy plains in Egypt, this might be a place of interment of peculiar sanctity, not for the metropolis only, but the whole province. That a temple of Diana once existed near the spot, reputed of great sanctity, gives plausibility to the conjecture. The remains of the temple no longer exist; and the princes of Lydia, her wise men, her captains, and her rulers and her mighty men, sleep a perpetual sleep."—ARUNDELL.

Mr. Arundell subsequently mentions, that whilst at a place called Adala, near Sardis, he found in a small church, resorted to by the neighboring Greeks on Sundays, a single Greek at his devotions. "I invited him to my room, and offered him a Testament; but he was quite indifferent to the offer, and in effect actually refused it, though he knew it to be the Gospel, and understood me when I read to him the fourth chapter of St. John. I then requested him to give it to the priest for the use of the church. He declined to do so, and I was obliged to leave it myself in the church. So near Sardis, only five hours distant, and little more from Philadelphia, in so little estimation is the word of God held!"

Visiting Sardis at a subsequent period, Mr. Arundell writes: "We dismounted at the door of the Cafe of Vourkanle. . . . Every Turkish name has its signification; and Vourkanle means *much blood-shedding;* a very likely and appropriate name for a place in the plains of Sardis, where so

much blood has been shed in every period of history. Three large tumuli, which lay on the right of the road soon after, were incontestable evidences that much blood had been shed, and the thousands that fell now mingle their dust in peace.

"The Acropolis of Sardis was now rising before us. . . . and the soft sandstone rock distorted and rent. . . . perhaps by earthquakes.

"With our eyes fixed on this crumbling monument of the grandeur and nothingness of man, and looking in vain for the city, whose multitudes lie under the countless sepulchral hillocks on the other side of the Hermus, we arrived at what was once the metropolis of Lydia.

"If I should be asked what impresses the mind most strongly on beholding Sardis, I should say, its indescribable solitude, like the darkness in Egypt, darkness that could be felt. So the deep solitude of the spot, once the 'lady of kingdoms,' produces a corresponding feeling of desolate abandonment in the mind, which can never be forgotten.

"We walked along the banks of the famed river Pactolus, and thence to the two remaining pillars of the Temple of Cybele, one of the oldest monuments at present existing in the world, and erected only three hundred years after the Temple of Solomon. It is remarkable that the Turks call a branch of the Pactolus by a name signifying the 'river of riches,' preserving the tradition of the *golden*-streamed Pactolus.

"Connect this feeling with the message of the Apocalypse to the Church of Sardis, 'thou hast a name that thou livest, and art *dead;* I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee'—and then look round and ask, Where are the churches, where are the Christians of Sardis? The tumuli beyond the Hermus reply, '*All dead!*' suffering the infliction of the threatened judgment of God for the abuse of their privileges."—ARUNDELL'S *Researches in Asia Minor.*

PHILADELPHIA.

Named from its Founder—Epistle—Pillar—Population—Episcopal Palace—Gibbon—Impressions of Travelers—Minarets—Many Christians Here—Spiritual Darkness—The Turtle Dove—Visit to the Bishop—"City of God" or "Beautiful City"—Antiquities—Unmeaning Worship—Number of Churches.

MOUNT TMOLUS, with its lofty form, overlooks the city of Philadelphia, so called from its founder, Attalus II., who was surnamed Philadelphus, in honor of his brotherly affection. It is also washed by the little river Cogamus, a tributary of the Hermus. Its annals are very eventful. Several times it suffered severely from earthquakes, but was always rebuilt by the industry of its inhabitants, who have ever been famous throughout Asia Minor for the purity of their morals. In common with several other Asiatic cities, it embraced the doctrines of Christianity, and with a fervor which earned for it the praise of its Divine Lord. He spoke to the head of its Christian church in assuring and hopeful terms:

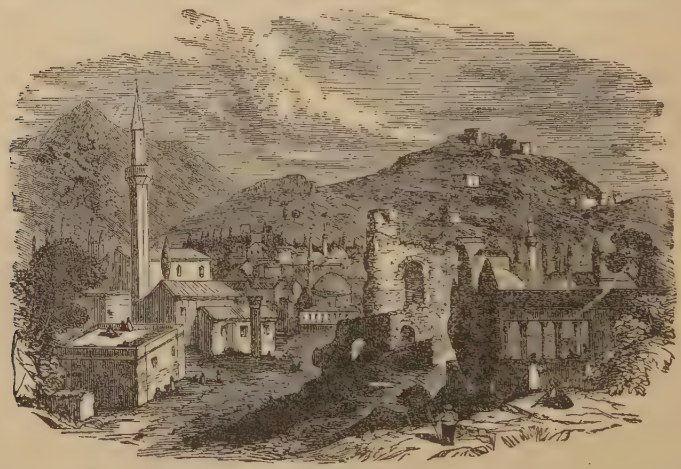
"I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. . . . Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. . . . . Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God." (Rev. iii. 8–12.)

It is a curious illustration of this verse that among the ruins of the ancient city rises a tall solitary pillar; and in

like manner, among the ruined towns of Asia Minor stands Philadelphia—erect and unshaken. It still contains a population of about 15,000, one-twelfth of whom call themselves Christians; so that a Christian church has been preserved here throughout the vicissitudes of eighteen centuries—the "door" has been "kept open," and no man dare shut it!

The remains of the churches and temples of the ancient Philadelphia are interesting, and its inhabitants profess to point out the building wherein those disciples assembled who received the apostolic message of St. John.

This decayed town, we may add, is the seat of a Greek bishopric. When it was visited by the eminent traveler, Dr



PHILADELPHIA.

Chandler, the bishop was absent, and he and his party were received at the "episcopal palace"—a mean little cottage of clay, very indifferently built—by the *protopapas*, or chief priest. He proved to be ignorant of the Greek tongue—the very language in which St. John wrote and ministered—and could only discourse in Turkish. He had no idea that Philadelphia existed before Christianity, and asserted that it had become a city in consequence of its numerous religious foun

dations. The number of churches he reckoned at twenty-four, mostly in ruins, and mere masses of wall, decorated with badly painted saints. The Episcopal church is a spacious pile, and profusely ornamented with gilding, carving, and holy portraits; the result, however, is neither artistic nor attractive.

The historian Gibbon says: "In the loss of Ephesus the Christians deplored the fall of the first angel, the extinction of the first candlestick of the Revelation: the desolation is complete; and the Temple of Diana or the Church of Mary will equally elude the search of the curious traveler. The circus and three stately theaters of Laodicea are now peopled with wolves and foxes; Sardis is reduced to a miserable village; the God of Mohammed is invoked in the mosques of Thyatira and Pergamos; and the populousness of Smyrna is supported by the foreign trade of the Franks and Armenians. Philadelphia alone has been saved."

We add the impressions of one or two travelers:

"As we drew near Philadelphia, I read with much interest the epistle to that church. The town is situated on a rising ground, beneath the snowy Mount Tmolus. The houses are embosomed in trees, which have just assumed their fresh green foliage, and give a beautiful effect to the scene. I counted six minarets. We entered through a ruined wall; massy, but by no means of great antiquity. The streets are excessively ill-paved and dirty. The tear of Christian pity must fall over modern Philadelphia. Were Christ Himself to visit it, would He not weep over it, as once over Jerusalem? Alas! the generation of those who kept the word of our Lord's patience is gone by; and here, as in too many other parts of the Christian vineyard, it is difficult to discover better fruits than those which are afforded by briars and brambles! It is, indeed, an interesting circumstance to find Christianity more flourishing here than in many other parts of the Turkish empire. There is still a numerous Christian

population, occupying eight hundred houses. Divine service is performed every Sunday in five churches; and there are twenty of a smaller description, in which, once a year, the liturgy is read. But though the candlestick remains, its light is obscured: the lamp still exists, but where is its oil? Where is now the word of our Lord's patience?—it is conveyed in sounds unintelligible to those who hear. When the very epistle to their own church is read, they understand it not! The word of legendary superstition and of multifarious will-worship is now more familiar to their ears. And where is the bright exhibition of Christian virtues? Unhappily, the character of Christians in these countries will scarcely bear comparison with that of Mohammedans themselves!

"We have just ascended the ancient Acropolis, a hill above the city, which commands a most extensive prospect. Below is the town, surrounded by its wall and embosomed in trees.

"We see this interesting place to peculiar advantage. For several days we have been contending with rain, cold and adverse weather; but to-day, on arriving at Philadelphia, lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is 'heard in the land.' (Song of Sol. ii. 12.) The voice of the turtle charmed me greatly, during our stay here. This favorite bird is so tame that it flies about the streets, and comes up close to our door in the khan. The remains of antiquity at Philadelphia are not numerous. I have noticed a few beautiful sarcophagi, now devoted to the purpose of troughs. . . . .

"Our visit to Philadelphia was rendered the more interesting, by the circumstance of our being the bishop's visitors. He pressed us so strongly to make his house our home, that we thought it right to comply with his wishes. Many of his remarks afforded us satisfaction. . . . The Christian population he considered to be on the increase at Philadelphia. . . . In the evening we attended the Metropolitan church; but to

give a true account of the sad degradation of Christian worship exhibited on this occasion, would be equally difficult and painful. We were highly pleased with the engaging manner of Panaretnos. His house, also, which is termed, as usual by the Greeks, the Metropolis, exhibited a decorum suited to a Christian bishop. . . . From the verandah, we had a view over the whole town by day; and at night we observed the illuminated minarets spreading their light over the city, as is customary during the (Mohammedan) fast of Ramazan. . . . The circumstance that Philadelphia is now called Allah-Shehr, 'the City of God,' when viewed in connection with the promises made to that church, and especially with that of writing *the name of the city of God* upon its faithful members, is, to say the least, a singular coincidence."
—HARTLEY'S *Researches*.

"We arrived at Allah-Shehr, the ancient Philadelphia. . . entering the town through chasms in the old wall, but which, being built of small stones, did not appear to be particularly ancient; the passage through the streets was filthy in the extreme, though the view of the place as we approached it was extremely beautiful, and well entitled to the appellation of the 'fair city.' . . . . We walked through the town, and up to the hill on which formerly stood the Acropolis; the houses were very mean, and we saw nothing on the hill but some walls of comparatively modern date. On an adjoining hill, separated from the first by a deep fosse or a narrow ravine, were similar fragments of walls; but we

POMEGRANATE.

observed a few rows of large square stones just appearing above the surface of the ground. The view from these elevated situations was magnificent; highly cultivated gardens and vineyards lay at the back and the sides of the town, and before it one of the most extensive and richest plains in Asia. The Turkish name, 'Allah-Shehr,'[1] 'the city of God,' reminded me of the Psalmist, 'Beautiful for situation is Mount Zion,' etc. We returned through a different part of the town, and, though objects of much curiosity, we were treated with civility, confirming Chandler's observation, that the Philadelphians are a 'civil people.' It was extremely pleasing to see a number of turtle-doves on the roofs of the houses: they were well associated with the name of Philadelphia. The storks retain possession still of the walls of the city, as well as of the roofs of many of the houses. We called upon the bishop at three o'clock, who received us with much kind attention. . . . . At five o'clock, we accompanied him to his church; it was Palm Sunday, and the service extremely long. I could not help shedding tears, at contrasting this unmeaning mummery with the pure worship of primitive times, which probably had been offered on the very site of the present church. A single pillar, evidently belonging to a much earlier structure, reminded me of the reward of victory promised to the faithful member of the church of Philadelphia. 'Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God.'

"The bishop insisted on our remaining in his house for the night. . . . We learned from him that there were in Philadelphia about three hundred Greek houses, and nearly three thousand Turkish; that there were twenty-five churches, but that Divine service was chiefly confined to five only, in which it was regularly performed every week, but in the larger num-

[1] Others call it Ellah-Shehr, "Beautiful City."

ber only once a year. He pointed out to me a part of a high stone wall having the remains of a brick arch on the top, which he said was part of the church of the Apocalypse, and dedicated to St. John. It is probable that these remains are really those of the first Christian church in Philadelphia. We saw at Ephesus, and subsequently at Sardis, precisely the same kind of building; stone walls with brick arches, and which tradition said positively were remains of churches. This solitary fragment, in deepest shadow, was strongly contrasted with the light and lofty minarets of three adjoining mosques, blazing with innumerable lamps, as usual after sunset during the Ramazan. . . .

"The following testimony, from the author of the 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' to the truth of the prophecy, 'I will keep thee from the hour of temptation' (Rev. iii. 10), is as valuable as remarkable. 'At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the emperor, encompassed on all sides by the Turks, her valiant citizens defended their religion and freedom above fourscore years, and at length capitulated with the proudest of the Ottomans, in 1390. Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect—*a column in a scene of ruins.*'"—ARUNDELL.

We are told that it was not uncommon among the heathen nations of antiquity to erect monumental pillars within the temples of their gods, and to inscribe on these columns the most important circumstances in the life of the deceased—for instance, the name of the particular deity under whose auspices he had placed himself, the name of the city of which he was enrolled a citizen, and the name of the general under whose command he had fought and bled and conquered. There is probably an allusion to this striking custom in the gracious promise with which our Lord concludes the epistle to the church of Philadelphia. He assures the Christian conqueror that on the day when his earthly warfare is finished he shall be removed into the heavenly temple, and shall

become a perpetual trophy, a glorious monument, of the victory of his redeeming Leader. He shall bear the name of his God, under whose auspices he has contended, even the Lord Jehovah; the name of the city among whose holy and happy inmates he shall be forever enrolled, even that "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Above all, there shall be written upon him the name, "the new name," of Him under whom he has fought the good fight and kept the faith and received the crown, "even my new name," says the Lord Jesus Christ--Redeemer, Saviour, Mediator, Intercessor; for these were all new names, obtained on Calvary by Him who had been from all eternity "King of kings and Lord of lords."

When heaven and earth shall pass away, the living pillars in the temple of their God shall stand unchanged and unchangeable, everlasting monuments of the love of the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, and of the happiness of His redeemed people, "for they shall go no more out forever."

LAODICEA.

Medical School— Philosophy—Epistle—Great Wealth—Council—Desolation—Volcanic Action—Earthquakes—Odeum—Theaters—Circus—Village of Eski-Hissar—Aqueduct.

More than forty miles to the east of Ephesus was situated Laodicea, now known as *Eski-hissar*, or the Old Castle. It lies one mile to the south of the river Lycus, and was built by Laodice, Queen of Antiochus Theos, on the site of an older city named Diospolis. At an earlier period it became the seat of a Christian church. Its inhabitants were distinguished by their successful cultivation of the arts and sciences, and especially by the famous medical school which they supported. It was owing, perhaps, to their cold philosophical culture that those among them who had embraced Christianity called forth the rebuke of the Saviour by their want of zeal and enthusiasm:

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." (Rev. iii. 15–18.)

During the reign of Tiberius the city was destroyed by an earthquake; but its inhabitants, who were not less famous for their wealth than for their learning, speedily rebuilt it.

In 363 it was still of so much importance that one of those gatherings of bishops and priests, known as Councils, was held here, and determined the arrangement of the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments.

In 1255, Laodicea was ravaged by the Turks, and again in 1402, when it was literally razed to the ground. It is now a pile of mouldering ruins. "It is even more solitary," says a traveler, "than Ephesus —sitting in widowed loneliness—its

LAODICEA.

walls grass-grown—its temples desolate—its very name perished! The threatening is accomplished; it now stands rejected of God and deserted of man—its glory a ruin—its name a reproach."

It should be noticed as a striking commentary on the words recorded by the Evangelist—"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot"—that the whole neighborhood of Laodicea bears traces of volcanic action. The hill of Laodicea consists of dry impalpable

soil, very porous, and broken up with cavities resembling the bore of a pipe. As the traveler rides along, the ground echoes beneath his horse's hoofs. The stones are mostly masses of pebbles, or of gravel consolidated, and as light as pumice-stone. The surrounding country contains many hot springs, bubbling up in the plain or in the mud of the river, and numerous pestilential grottoes, whose depths are filled with unwholesome vapors. And it has always been subject to earthquakes. In truth, it was of old believed that the country about the Meander was completely undermined by fire and and water.

The principal ruins are those of an amphitheater, a magnificent odeum (or musical theater), and other public buildings; but the whole surface within the line of the city-wall is strewn with pedestals and fragments. Pococke mentions, among the remains of a stately structure, two pillars, about a foot and a half in diameter, which appeared to be "Oriental jasper-agate."

An inscription found in the amphitheater records that the building, which occupied twelve years, was completed "during the consulate of Trajan," the great Roman emperor, eighty-two years after the birth of Christ. It was, therefore, in all the freshness of its splendor at the time the Apostle John conveyed the warning of the Lord to the lukewarm Laodiceans.

"Laodicea," says Dr. Smith, "a city of Lydia, according to the geography of the ancients, is situated upon six or seven hills, taking up a vast compass of ground. It is now utterly desolated, and without any inhabitant except wolves, and jackals, and foxes; but the ruins show sufficiently what it has been formerly, the three theaters and the circus adding much to the stateliness of it, and arguing its greatness. That whose entrance is to the north-east is very large, and might contain between twenty and thirty thousand men, having about fifty steps, which are about a yard broad, and a foot and a quarter in height one from another, the plain at

the bottom being about thirty yards over. The circus has about two and twenty steps, which remain firm and entire and is above three hundred and forty paces in length from one end to the other; the entrance to the east. At the opposite extremity is a cave that has a very handsome arch, upon which is found an inscription, purporting that the building occupied twelve years in the construction and was dedicated to Vespasian.

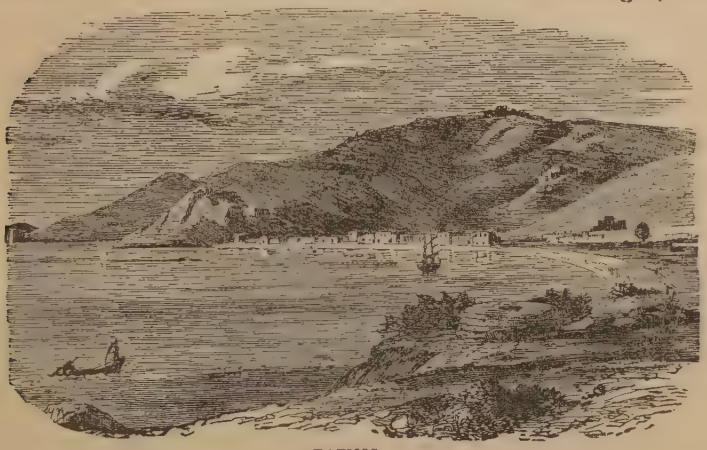
"What painful recollections are connected with this period! Twelve years were employed in building this place of savage exhibition, and in the first of these years the Temple of Jerusalem, which had been forty-eight years in building, was razed to its foundations, and of the Holy City not one stone was left upon another which was not thrown down! This abomination of desolation was accomplished by him to whom this amphitheater was dedicated, and may have been in honor of his triumph over the once favored people of God. Perhaps in this very amphitheater the followers of a crucified Redeemer were a few years afterward exposed to the fury of wild beasts, by the order of Trajan, of whose character the predominant lines were clemency and benevolence.

"'The city Laodicea,' says Chandler, 'was named from Laodice, the wife of its founder Antiochus. It was long an inconsiderable place, but increased toward the age of Augustus Cæsar. Laodicea was often damaged by earthquakes, and restored by its own opulence, or by the munificence of the Roman emperors. These resources failed, and the city, it is probable, became early a scene of ruin.' . . .

"On leaving the ruins and arriving at the village of Eskihissar, we found our party had prevailed with difficulty on the inhabitants to lodge us, and our apartment was a stable. The entire population of the village, all Turks, came to visit us, full of curiosity, but not uncivil; though exorbitant in their prices for everything. . . .

"In the morning, while the horses were preparing, I

walked up the side of a hill, which commands an extensive view. The village and its flat-roofed houses, and trees, lay on the right; behind them a ridge of hills, over which rose mountains capped with snow. In front, separated only by a narrow vale, in which is the amphitheater, on a long ridge, lay the ruins of Laodicea; directly behind them is seen the city of Hierapolis, appearing like a large semi-circular excavation of white marble, on the side of Mount Messogis; be-



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tween which and the ruins of Laodicea, is seen part of the plain of Lycus. At the left, higher up the hill, is a long line of arches, in large masses much decayed, once an aqueduct; before which were Turcoman black tents, and thousands of goats and sheep of the same color."—ARUNDELL.

"The city of Laodicea was seated on a hill of moderate height, but of considerable extent. Its ruins attest that it was large, populous, and splendid. There are still to be seen an amphitheater, a theater, an aqueduct, and many other buildings. . . . But its present condition is in striking conformity with the rebuke and threatening of God. Not a single Christian resides at Laodicea. No Turk even has a fixed residence on this forsaken spot."—HARTLEY.

"Nothing can exceed the desolation and melancholy appearance of the site of Laodicea; no picturesque features in the nature of the ground on which it stands relieve the dull uniformity of its undulating and barren hills. . . . Its stadium, gymnasium, and theaters (one of which is in a state of great preservation) are well deserving of notice. Other buildings, also on the top of the hill, are full of interest; and on the east the line of the ancient wall may be distinctly traced; there is also a street within and without the town flanked by the ruins of a colonnade and numerous pedestals. North of the town, toward Lycus, are many sarcophagi with their covers lying near them, and all having been long since rifled."

Amongst other interesting objects, Mr. Hamilton mentions the ruins of an aqueduct which appears to have been overthrown by an earthquake.

"The Stadium, which is in a good state of preservation, is near the southern extremity of the city. The seats, almost perfect, are arranged along two sides of a narrow valley, which appears to have been taken advantage of for this purpose, and to have been closed up at both ends. Toward the west are considerable remains of a subterranean passage, by which chariots and horses were admitted into the arena, with a long inscription over the entrance. . . . The whole area of the ancient city is covered with ruined buildings. . . . The ruins bear the stamp of Roman extravagance and luxury, rather than of the massive solidity of the Greeks. Strabo attributes the celebrity of the place to the fertility of the soil and the wealth of some of its inhabitants."—See HAMILTON, *Researches in Asia Minor.*

THE END.